# COURTS AND CAMPS OF THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE

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# COURTS & CAMPS OF THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE

BEING A MIRROR OF THE LIFE AND TIMES OF THE IDEAL GENTLEMAN COUNT BALDASSARE CASTIGLIONE DERIVED LARGELY FROM HIS OWN LETTERS AND OTHER CONTEMPORARY SOURCES, TO WHICH IS ADDED AN EPITOME OF HIS FAMOUS WORK "THE BOOK OF THE COURTIER" WITH APPRECIATIONS & ANNOTATIONS

*By* CHRISTOPHER HARE AUTHOR OF "MARGUERITE OF AUSTRIA," "LOUIS XI," "A QUEEN OF QUEENS," ETC.

*ILLUSTRATED*

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*Cover design: Arms of Castiglione (from the "Libro d'Oro," of Mantua)*

# INTRODUCTION

IT is a truism to remark that the favourite masterpiece of one age may seem to be almost forgotten in a later day. Yet, when the verdict alike of his contemporaries and of posterity has once placed a man amongst the Band of Immortals, we may rest certain that his work will have might to conquer the apparently inevitable result of Time—oblivion.

In that roll-call of Honour we venture to place Count Baldassare Castiglione, when we remember the world-wide fame of his *Book of the Courtier*, "a mirror of the age which gave it birth," a model for all Europe of the Ideal Gentleman, and a textbook on the subject in the spacious days of Elizabethan culture. Thus we stand in need of no apology for telling the little-known story of Castiglione's life, the stirring events in which it was his fortune to take part, and the distinguished group of noble lords and ladies, of great soldiers, scholars, poets, and artists who honoured him with their friendship.

In choosing one of the minor characters in the great Drama of History, there is more space and freedom to dwell upon the intimate daily life of the Renaissance, with all its abiding charm. A purely Historical work, dealing mainly with Kings and ruling Princes, must give such supreme importance to political matters, that there is no time to linger in the pleasant byways of life, where the flowers blossom and the birds sing.

# INTRODUCTION

How often in fiction does the author's instinct lead him to choose some secondary character to tell the story, in which he has the inestimable advantage of being a looker-on as well as an actor!

Never was there a man more fitted by talent and position to play this part than Count Castiglione. His was one of those rare natures which combine absolute honesty and outspoken courage, with all those ideal qualities of a Perfect Courtier which made him everywhere beloved and trusted by Popes and Princes and Emperor, so that with his keen insight he gained intimate and unique knowledge of their character and their deeds. Moreover he was an accomplished letter-writer and, fortunately for us, an immense mass of his correspondence has been preserved.

We are thus able to look upon that most interesting period of the Italian Renaissance, from the fresh point of view of one who had the good fortune to be behind the scenes, or even on the stage, when any striking performance took place. The mere story of Castiglione's own life, his friendships, his marriage, and his adventures, is a romance in itself. But his greatest claim to our interest is his famous and entrancing *Book of the Courtier*, written in loyal devotion, to preserve the memory of those "golden years of his life" at the Court of Urbino. Here we find ourselves of a sudden wafted into an enchanted land by the magician to whom it occurred, in a moment of inspiration, that he would chronicle the "sweet conversation" of the noble personages gathered round his peerless Duchess, and thus crystallise for ever the evanescent charm of the spoken word.

A sketch of the *Cortegiano* is added to this history

of Count Baldassare Castiglione, for whom these words of Tasso will prepare the way :—

. . . Mentre dureranno le Corti, mentre dureranno i Principi, le donne e i Cavalieri insieme si raccoglieranno ; mentre valore e cortesia avranno albergo negli animi nostri, sara in pregio il nome del Castiglione.

(T. Tasso, *Diologo della Corte.*)

(While Courts shall last, while Princes shall endure, and ladies and knights shall meet together ; while valour and courtesy shall have an abode in our souls, the name of Castiglione shall remain precious to us.)

# INTRODUCTORY LETTER OF THE HISTORIAN, SIGNOR A. LUZIO

KEEPER OF THE ARCHIVES OF MANTUA

You have given me in advance the pleasure of reading your book, in which, with so much accuracy and sympathy, you speak of the most perfect courtier of his century, B. Castiglione.

I thank you with sincere gratitude for your courtesy, and I venture to offer you the copy of a document in the Gonzaga Archives which will introduce your beautiful work better than any modest words of mine.

In 1519, the very year in which Castiglione went to Rome as ambassador of the Gonzagas, the representative of Henry VIII at the Court of Leo X, "Silvestro Gigli," Bishop of Worcester, wrote thus to the Marchese of Mantua:—

Ill$^{mo}$ et Ex$^{mo}$ D$^{no}$ . . .

Knowing the affection and respect of Your Excellency towards the Most Christian Majesty of my Lord, the King of England, and the universal love towards all the nation, and also the confidence and service which I hold with Your Excellency, I have felt it safe to write to you, feeling certain that in your kindness you do not look upon my letters as trivial.

Messer Antonio Frokmorthon (Throgmorton?), the bearer of this present, an English gentleman of honourable and noble parents coming from England hither to Rome together with his father, as fate would have it, his father died by the way. Therefore when he found himself thus in Italy he wrote to his own country, to his elder brother and his relations, asking them to direct him as to what he should do; from whom he received the reply that for some time he should remain in Italy in the service of some great and honourable Lord, to learn

the customs and manners of this country; and I on his behalf and that of his kindred, my friends, beg that you will favour and help him to this effect. Thus for the aforesaid reasons, and knowing the magnanimity, nobility, and munificence of Your Excellency and of your Court, I have thought that in no other place could he better fulfil his desire and be more willingly received than in your service. Wherefore with all my heart I pray that you will deign to receive the said M. Antonio, who has the means to maintain himself well, and to do honour to you without much trouble, and I am certain that he will serve you faithfully. This, as I hope, being accomplished, besides giving great pleasure to the King's Majesty and to many Lords and gentlemen of the nation, will oblige me for ever.

Rome, January 9, 1519.
Servus
Sil. Episcopus Wigorniensis
Ch^mi^ Regis Angliæ Oratoris.

This seems to me one of the most characteristic documents showing the importance which Mantua then had in the civilised world; it was looked upon as one of the most brilliant centres of the Italian Renaissance; it was pointed out as the best place where a young English gentleman could perfect his education.

Alas! to-day it has become a squalid provincial city, unjustly neglected by foreigners, although so many historical treasures are collected in its archives, and its monuments are adorned with so many luminous traces of beauty.

To you, who with intellectual and loving discernment have claimed for Castiglione and his country the attention of the English public, it is a pleasure for me to express my most cordial appreciation and my most sincere praise.

ALESSANDRO LUZIO,
*Direttore dell' Archivio di Stato.*

## CHAPTER I

1478–1494

BALDASSARE CASTIGLIONE—HIS BIRTH AND LINEAGE—HIS EARLY HOME—EDUCATION IN THE DAYS OF THE RENAISSANCE—THE GONZAGA FAMILY—FRANCESCO GONZAGA BECOMES MARCHESE OF MANTUA—CHIARA GONZAGA MARRIES GILBERT DE MONTPENSIER—ELISABETTA GONZAGA MARRIES GUIDOBALDO, DUKE OF URBINO—THE COMING OF ISABELLA D'ESTE TO MANTUA—STORY OF THE NEW WORLD—CASTIGLIONE GOES TO STUDY AT MILAN.

IN those stately Courts of the Renaissance, the wise courtier who could guide and counsel his lord, and serve him in diplomacy at home and abroad, had quite as important a part to play as the man of action, the warrior captain of his army. But in Count Baldassare Castiglione we find combined the perfect courtier, the gallant *condottiere* and the distinguished man of letters. Born of high estate, he was destined to carry on the noblest traditions of his race, to become a citizen of the world, to be a welcome guest at the most cultivated Courts of Europe, and to sit in council with princes and kings, with cardinals and popes.

The warrior host, the crash of arms, the triumphant entry; pomps and pageants alike of peace and war were to him familiar scenes, in which he had to play his own stately part. Count Castiglione had the mar-

vellous good fortune to be ever at the centre of interest in those epoch-making days of a nation's story. Perhaps no period of Italian history is of more striking interest than the end of the fifteenth and beginning of the sixteenth century—the years between 1478 and 1529, which cover the span of his adventurous life. The mention of a few illustrious contemporaries will place his period more vividly than any list of dates. Born a few years later than Isabella and Beatrice d'Este, their brother Alfonso Duke of Ferrara, Michelangelo, Leo X, and Titian—the same year as Giorgione the artist and Giovanni dei Medici (delle Bande nere)—Castiglione was five years older than Martin Luther, and Raphael with whom he became linked in the most intimate bonds of friendship.

Our courtier was of noble birth (which was greatly to his advantage, on the ground which he points out in the *Cortegiano* that *noblesse oblige*), the eldest son of the distinguished *condottiere* of men-at-arms in the service of the Marchese of Mantua—Count Cristoforo Castiglione III, he was proudly styled, as though of a reigning dynasty. The mother of Baldassare was Aloisia da Antonia Gonzaga, a beautiful and accomplished woman, a near kinswoman of the ruling family in Mantua. During the whole of his life, the constant and intimate correspondence of her son reveals Madonna Aloisia to us as a most wise and devoted mother, worthy indeed of his unchanging love and confidence.

Baldassare Castiglione was born on Sunday, the 6th of November, 1478, in the picturesque old castle of Casatico, within the Commune of Maccaria, about twelve miles south-west of Mantua on the way to Cremona. This was one of the hereditary domains of

the Castiglione family, who also possessed a grand old thirteenth-century palace in Mantua, whose splendid portals may still be seen on the Piazza Sordello, in the quarter of San Jacobi.

There was a passion for beautiful gardens in the Italy of that day, and these were nowhere more luxurious than in the rich fertile country around Mantua. In the charm of its surroundings, the stately home at Casatico could bear comparison with the more famous villas of the Gonzaga princes. We will try to picture its old-world beauty. Closed in by thick dark hedges of box and yew, sheltered by groves of plane-trees to the south, so that there was always shade at noon, the gardens were laid out in terraces in front of the Castello, from whence stretched forth long straight walks covered with vine-grown pergolas, and bordered with rose-trees and jessamine. Green lawns sloped down to the steep banks of the river Oglio, with a marble fountain in the centre of the turf, and orange trees in boxes at every corner, while in distant nooks were sylvan arbours and strange grottoes with quaint figures of animals carved in stone. A place to dream and linger in on a summer evening, "green with perpetual verdure, musical with the voice of waters, glowing with luscious fruits and sweetest flowers."

Such was the home of Baldassare's early days, an ideal spot for the games of happy childhood, for his was no lonely lot. Besides his three sisters Polissena, Francesca, and Anna, and his younger brother Jeronimo, there was no lack of Gonzaga cousins both at Mantua and at Bozzolo, a few miles to the south of Casatico. One early playmate, Cesare Gonzaga, three years older than himself, remained till death his in-

separable companion and friend. With kindred tastes, they shared alike in study and in the fortune of war and diplomacy.

The Renaissance in Italy was a palmy time for children of high birth. We see it well described in the charming letters of little Piero dei Medici to his father, asking for a new pony, for "some of the best setters that there are," and merrily describing the doings of his brothers and sisters. A bright-spirited boy would be accustomed from his earliest years to imitate, from afar, the sports and amusements of his elders. Baldassare learnt to ride almost as soon as to walk, and in after years we are constantly reminded of his splendid horsemanship. This was an indispensable accomplishment in those times when so much depended upon individual gallantry, for in the day of battle it might mean life or death to the rider. Thus we remember the three rules which Francesco Sforza, the greatest of the *condottieri*, gave to his son :—

"Leave other men's wives alone.

"Strike none of your followers, or if you do, send the injured man far away.

"Never ride a hard-mouthed horse, or one who drops his shoe."

It was necessary to be a good judge of a horse, as well as a perfect rider. Castiglione himself once, in writing for a war-horse, remarks: "He must be thoroughly trained, and have brains." Amongst numberless other instances, we remember that the life of Charles VIII was saved at the battle of Fornovo by the docility and swiftness of his charger "Savoie."

Cristoforo Castiglione encouraged his son in every manly pursuit; he was early initiated into the mysteries

of hunting and hawking, and every knightly exercise and pastime. But that which strikes us most in the education of these children of the Renaissance is not only their marvellous proficiency in classical and literary studies, but their enduring love for them. Baldassare Castiglione was one of those happy scholars to whom learning seemed to come so lightly, and yet who, amid the distractions of his full active life, could use Latin as his mother-tongue; make a stately speech, write a diplomatic letter, or toss off an ode or an epigram. The Classic authors of Greece and Rome remain ever such familiar friends to him that in the *Cortegiano*, his masterpiece, their deepest thoughts shine forth once more in vivid life and beauty.

The education which bore such fruit in the children of the Renaissance deserves a careful study. It is true that Baldassare was fortunate, not alone in the time but in the place of his birth. The labours of the famous Vittorino da Feltre, half a century before, had placed Mantua in the van of educational progress. This great humanist had a lofty ideal of a schoolmaster's mission, and was marvellously successful as a teacher. He came to the Casa Zoiosa (House of Joy) near the Castello of Mantua, as tutor to the Gonzaga princes in the first place, but he soon had quite a group of pupils under his care, including several maidens of high birth. His aim was to give a thorough training of mind and body, and to encourage a simple life, of which virtue and religion were the foundation. The course of study included Greek (in which Vittorino was specially distinguished), Latin, philosophy, logic, grammar, mathematics, and also music, dancing, and singing, varied by all kinds of outdoor sports and games,

amongst which the very energetic *palla* was most popular in the meadows by the Mincio.

An enthusiast himself, Vittorino had the rare and precious gift of inspiring his pupils with his own enthusiasm for learning. With regard to his methods, we are told that he would choose his own favourite passages from Homer, Demosthenes, Virgil, or Cicero, and read them aloud, explaining as he continued; then encourage his class to learn them by heart in order to improve their style. One of his rules was: "First be sure that you have something to say, then say it as simply as possible." Those who were slow to learn received special attention from him, and it is interesting to know that he had scholars of all ranks, some who were too poor to pay being received "for the love of God." During the long summer days, he would take his scholars to the rising ground at Pietola, the reputed birthplace of Virgil, and tell them stories of the great heroes of olden time, as they rested after their games; and we even hear of an occasional visit to the Tyrolese Alps. Amongst his distinguished pupils we find the great Duke of Urbino, Federico di Montefeltro, the Gonzaga princesses, Margherita and Cecilia Gonzaga, and their brothers.

The traditions of Vittorino da Feltre still lived in Mantua in the days of Castiglione, and amongst his learned teachers we hear of the Veronese professor Columbino reading Virgil publicly in the city, and Pietro di Vidana, who devoted himself chiefly to dramatic art, having frequent representations of the best comedies of Plautus and Terence. Other distinguished scholars are mentioned as teaching here, such as Giovanni da Cavallana, who encouraged the

study of Virgil, Ovid, Titus Livius, and also the Italian Classics. Another Mantuan tutor thus describes his method of teaching a young prince: "We have gone through the abridged history of Livy, and he has translated two books of Valerius with my help in case of difficulty, and now he has a good knowledge of Roman history and the Laws and Constitution of the State. . . . I have taught him a work of Ovid, *In Ibim*, full of unfamiliar fables and stories. . . . He has read some beautiful elegies with me, and construes orations with ease. I dictate epistles to him every day . . . and also expound an epistle of Cicero to him, for the sake of his style. . . . In modern literature, he has read through Petrarch with me, and other poems . . . 'Francesco Vigilius.'"

Such interest and enthusiasm as we have seen in the teachers of that day deserved to be successful.

They were undoubtedly so in the case of Baldassare, who became a most accomplished youth, and whose love for learning had been so stimulated in early days, that it continued an undying source of pleasure through life. Besides his literary pursuits, we are told that he studied music, architecture, sculpture, and painting, and it is quite possible that he may have been encouraged in the love of art by seeing the famous painter Andrea Mantegna at work on his great series of "Triumphs" for the decoration of the Castello of Mantua.

It will be necessary to give a brief sketch of the reigning Gonzaga family, which is so intimately connected with the fortunes of Baldassare Castiglione. In the year of his birth, 1478, Federico Gonzaga succeeded his father Lodovico as Marchese of Mantua, and soon afterwards he lost his young wife Margaret of

Bavaria, and his six children were left to the care of their grandmother, Barbara of Brandenberg. These were Chiara, Francesco (who succeeded his father in 1484), Sigismondo, Elisabetta (the Duchess of Urbino, famous in the *Cortegiano*), Maddalena, and Giovanni, who was only five years old. When in 1481 a marriage was arranged for Chiara with Gilbert, Duc de Montpensier, we find that Count Cristoforo Castiglione and his wife Madonna Aloisia were in such high esteem at the Court of Mantua that they were chosen to escort the bride to France. This was a splendid match for the young Gonzaga princess, as her husband was one of the first nobles of the realm—of the blood royal, in direct descent from St. Louis, through the brother of Philippe le Hardi, Robert, who married Beatrice of Burgundy.

Was there no Court astrologer to predict to the gentle Chiara that her first-born son would be the most splendid and flamboyant figure of the Renaissance—the magnificent Prince Charles, Duc de Montpensier, Constable of France, who outdid kings in splendour, and whose story was to close with a tragedy of Empire?

The Marchesa Barbara died a few months after the marriage of her eldest granddaughter, and her solemn funeral procession, as she was borne through the streets of Mantua to the Duomo, may have been one of the earliest memories of young Castiglione. When Lorenzo dei Medici came to the city two years later, so illustrious a visitor as the Magnifico cannot fail to have made a vivid impression upon the boy, whose birth gave him a right to share in all that took place at the Court of Mantua. In 1484, the Marchese Federico died and was succeeded by his eldest son Francesco, who at eighteen

*Anderson, Photo* *Francesca*

FEDERICO OF URBINO

To face p. 8

was already betrothed to Isabella d'Este. There was constant coming and going of great people. In August, 1486, we find the young Duke of Urbino arriving as a visitor, on his betrothal to Elisabetta Gonzaga, the eldest of the two remaining princesses. The Court Chamberlain remarks in a letter that the illustrious guest "went for his pastime in a boat on the lake after having dined, but being unused to the water he became ill and landed at the gate of the Corte. Here he saw the Triumphs of Cæsar, which Mantegna was painting, and took much pleasure in them. Afterwards he passed onward to the Castello by the Via Coperta."

This young Guidobaldo of Urbino was a handsome, cultivated youth of fifteen, the same age as his proposed bride, but unfortunately he was delicate in health, and already a sufferer from hereditary gout. He had been a ruling prince during the last four years, since the death of his father Federico Montefeltro in 1482. This prince was destined in future years to have Baldassare Castiglione as his most devoted friend and courtier.

The next important visitor at Mantua was Chiara, the Duchess of Montpensier, who had now been married five years, but who still clung to her old home with the most passionate affection, and was never so happy as when she could be with her own people. The three sisters had a gay time together that Christmas of 1486, although they had to put off some of their proposed festivities until the New Year on account of the absence of their brother Francesco. The wedding of Elisabetta was arranged to take place early in the year 1488, and there were great preparations for the important event, and a stately ceremony in the Duomo before the bride set forth on her wedding journey.

It is interesting to suppose that, as the young princess was an intimate friend of his mother, Baldassare may even then have had a childish admiration for his peerless lady of the *Cortegiano*, whose idolater he was to become in those halcyon days at the Court of Urbino, with the far-off worship of lowly reverence. To the student of his life and work, all that concerns Elisabetta Gonzaga will be welcome.

With a goodly suite in attendance and her youngest brother Giovanni to keep her company, she set sail in a stately bucentaur down the river Po towards Ferrara; but the wintry weather was unpropitious, and such terrible storms came on, that the bridal party had serious hardships to endure before they were welcomed by Duke Ercole and the Duchess Leonora. Here the gentle, retiring Elisabetta was strongly attracted by the brilliant charm of Isabella d'Este, her future sister-in-law, and the two young girls formed a close friendship which lasted all their lives. It is curious to learn that before proceeding on her journey, the bride was confirmed by the Bishop of Ferrara in the presence of all the Este family. As she had reached the age of seventeen, it was an interlude which we should scarcely have expected.

After leaving Ferrara the poor bride met with more storms and bad weather, which reached such a pitch at Ravenna that the Podesta's palace was flooded. The mountain travel beyond was still more trying for the delicate girl, the torrents being so swollen as to be almost impassable, and she wrote to her brother Francesco, that if it had not been for the devotion of her attendants she should never have reached Urbino alive. Here a magnificent reception awaited her, to

atone for past sufferings. "Ranged upon the hill-slope were the ladies of the city, exquisitely dressed, and the children bearing olive-branches in their hands. As soon as the bridal party came in sight, a screen of mounted choristers rose up before them, accompanied by nymphs in antique garb; dogs started off in pursuit of hares let loose for them; the hills resounded with a cantata specially composed, and the Goddess of Mirth in person descended the slope and offered the young Duchess her congratulations and good wishes." Guidobaldo, with knightly devotion, led his lady by the hand down into the splendid palace which seemed to climb the last height above the city, and whose walls were draped with tapestry and cloth of gold, while on every side were costly pictures, antiques, and bronzes, and to crown all, a precious library of the rarest books and manuscripts.

As we take leave of Elisabetta in her new and splendid home, it is not without a touch of sympathy for her in the bitter tears she shed, on parting with her young brother and her Mantuan friends.

The next event of importance which in any way affected Castiglione was the appointment of Francesco Gonzaga, Marchese of Mantua, to the coveted position of Captain-General of the armies of Venice in 1489, as this would involve his frequent absence, and also that of Cristoforo Castiglione, who served under him as a *condottiere*. This was a period of comparative peace—a lull before the storm—although there had been serious disturbances, and a revolt of the inhabitants both at Forli and at Faenza. In October of this year, 1489, Maddalena, the last of the Gonzaga princesses, was married to Giovanni Sforza of Pesaro, but

her place was taken the following February by the coming of Isabella d'Este as bride to Francesco. On the magnificence of this favourite of fortune so much glowing enthusiasm has been spent, that it will only be needful to describe briefly the pageants which delighted the eyes of the twelve-year-old boy, Baldassare.

The wedding party, consisting of most of the Este family, arrived in a splendid gilt bucentaur with attendant galleys, and next came the grand procession into the city on horseback, through the streets garlanded with flowers and hung with banners, welcomed by the singing of children and by strange masques. When the bride alighted at the Castello she was met at the foot of the great staircase by Elisabetta, Duchess of Urbino, who had come with her husband to the wedding. They had brought their precious tapestries from Urbino to do honour to the occasion, and it seems strange to hear that the bridegroom had borrowed costly plate and carpets and brocades from all his friends and relations. Considering the difficulty and danger of transit in those days, it was very generous of them to lend their treasures! The festivities continued for days; banquets, dances, tournaments, and processions, until we should imagine the treasury of the small State would have been almost exhausted. It is true that Isabella brought with her a dowry of some 30,000 ducats, thirteen wedding chests richly decorated with gold leaf and ultramarine, costly hangings and artistic personal ornaments, besides a gilt chariot, a bucentaur of her own, and a silver altar with all needful office-books and vessels.

We learn that the young Marchesa found a kindred spirit in Madonna Luigia Castiglione, and that the

two ladies soon became inseparable friends. We can imagine them sitting together in the beautiful rooms of the Castello, or in the shady gardens of their country villas, reading the latest romance or poem, playing *scartino*, or working at some choice embroidery; while at times the blind improvisatore, Francesco Bello, would delight them with his flowing verse, until the Lord of Bozzolo summoned back his favourite to cheer his sick-room.

The coming of Madonna Isabella to Mantua made a gay and brilliant change in Court life. Every form of luxury was natural to her; splendid and most costly garments and jewels (her favourite dress was embroidered with notes of music in gold on an azure ground), and gay entertainments of every kind. All her rooms had to be painted and decorated afresh according to her minute directions, and she even brought with her a number of skilled artists to carry out her wishes. Apparently the young princess treated them in the most despotic fashion, and if there was any delay in obeying her orders, the luckless offender was threatened with the Castle dungeon. But when she was pleased she could be supremely gracious, and had a charming welcome for the many interesting visitors who came to do her homage. Amongst these were the young poet Antonio Tebaldeo, also the famous courtier and writer of pastoral plays and other poems, Niccolo da Correggio, with whom young Castiglione now made that first acquaintance which ripened into friendship. He must also have enjoyed meeting the great musicians who came to Mantua to give lessons in singing to the young Marchesa—Giovanni Martini, the organist from Constance, and Girolama da Sestola from Ferrara.

The famous Florentine, Atalante Migliorotti, came to perform in a gala performance of Poliziano's "Orfeo" at the villa of Marmirola, in 1491, and made the princess a present of a silver lute, the last fashionable instrument. Mantegna returned to Mantua from Rome the same year, and somewhat later the imperious Isabella sent for Giovanni Santi, the father of Raphael, to paint her portrait. He came at her request but, before the picture was finished, the poor man fell ill and had to return to the more healthy climate of Urbino. The visit to Mantua, however, proved fatal to the great artist, who never recovered from the fever caught there, and died the following August.

The Duchess Elisabetta often visited her old home and, on one occasion at least, a poet with his lyre was sent in the bucentaur which met her, that he might beguile the way with music and singing. Always delicate in health, she found the low-lying land of her birth suit her better than the bracing hill air which Santi pined for. She also enjoyed the society of her clever sister-in-law, who was sure to have all the newest books and poems and music; the latest editions of Godefroi de Bouillon, of the History of King Arthur and the Round Table, of the Paladins of France, the Life of Julius Cæsar, Boccaccio, and other romances, besides any classical Latin authors she might desire to read again. The Marchesa also set the example of going to the Duomo to listen to a course of Lenten sermons in 1492 by that popular Augustinian Friar, Fra Mariano de Genazzaro, who was almost as much admired in his day as Savonarola.

There is no record of the presence of Baldassare at these pious discourses, although it is extremely probable

that he escorted his mother to them. But we have little doubt that when, early in 1493, the marvellous news reached Mantua of the return of Cristoforo Columbus from his first voyage, and his discovery of the New World, the eager boy and his friend Giovanni Gonzaga listened with rapt excitement to the amazing story. This was the form in which it reached them.

A letter from Florence says that:

". . . the King of Spain sent some ships over the seas, which after a voyage of thirty-six days discovered certain islands, amongst others a very big one lying east, with broad rivers and terrible mountains, and a very fertile land, inhabited by handsome men and women, who go naked or only wear a cotton leaf round the waist. This country abounds in gold, and the people are very courteous and liberal of their property, and there are quantities of palms of more than six different kinds, and some wonderfully tall trees. There are other islands, five of which have been given names, and one which is nearly as large as Italy. And the rivers there run with gold, and there is plenty of copper but no iron, and many other wonders, and you can neither see the Arctic nor the Antarctic poles."

A further account was written by some servants of the Marchese of Mantua, who had been sent to buy horses in Spain:

"A Savona sailor named Columbus has landed here, bringing 30,000 ducats in gold, as well as pepper and other spices, and parrots as big as falcons and as red as pheasants. They found trees bearing fine wool, and others which produce wax and linen fibres, and men like Tartars, tall and active with long hair falling over their shoulders. . . . These sailors have brought back

a great quantity of gold, sandal-wood, and spices . . . and sixty parrots of variegated colours . . . as well as twelve Indians who have been sent to the King (Fernando of Aragon). And that land had great forests in which the trees grow so thickly you may scarce see the sky. . . ."

Another letter was chiefly interested about the inhabitants: ". . . men of our height of copper-coloured skin, with noses like apes. . . . All go naked, men and women alike. No one can understand their language . . . they eat the roots of trees and some kind of nut which is like pepper."[1]

As the story grew, how the fabled glories of the East must have loomed in dim magnificence before the imagination of the Italian youths, and we only marvel how they could tamely remain in the Old World! We can scarcely realise how elementary was the knowledge of geography in those days when distant lands had all the charm of vague romance. A *Mappa-mondo* drawn in charcoal is believed to have hung on a wall of one of the Mantuan palaces, but it was boldly filled in with the wildest fancies of the artist, for until more than a generation later even the general outline of the New World was not made out.

The future of Baldassare had already been a subject of anxious consideration to his parents, who felt that with a son of such great promise no means should be neglected for extending and perfecting his education. At that time the ancient University of Milan was reviving its former glories under the munificent patronage of Lodovico Sforza, and the young prince, Sigismondo Gonzaga, *Monsignore il Protonario*, had but recently

[1] G. Berghet, quoted by Mrs. Ady.

returned from a course of study in that city. There were other reasons which made Milan a desirable abode for young Castiglione; another branch of his family dwelt there, many of whom were in positions of importance. We hear of Giorgio Giacomo Archbishop of Bari, of Giovanni Stefano Count of Serone, Senator and Ducal Councillor; of Girolamo and Filippo, who were afterwards Presidents of the Senate of Milan; of Bonaventura, a famous historian, and of other members of the Castiglione clan.

By the influence of these noble kinsmen the youth might enter into the service of the Duke Lodovico, and thus not only complete his literary education at the Accademia, but also his courtly and chivalrous training at the cultured Court of Milan. In this city were gathered illustrious men of talent from all parts, from Greece, Florence, Venice, and other Italian states, distinguished in every branch of art and learning, attracted hither by the liberal patronage of Lodovico Sforza. He summoned from Pavia the Athenian scholar, Demetrius Calcondila, to lecture in Greek, and of him a loving disciple wrote: "It seems to me that in him are figured all the wisdom, the civility, and the elegance of those ancients who are so famous and so illustrious. Merely seeing him you fancy you are looking upon Plato; far more when you hear him speak."

Most of Castiglione's biographers speak of his studying under Giorgio Merula, called the "Sun of Alessandria," the historian and professor of Latin and rhetoric, who died in 1494 (which would make his coming to Milan two years earlier than the usually received opinion). He certainly learnt geometry and

mathematics from Fra Luca Pacioli of Borgo San Sepolcro, the greatest mathematician of the day, who wrote a book *De Divina Proportione*, of which the MS. edition, illustrated by Leonardo da Vinci, was presented to Il Moro for his wonderful library. History was taught by Ferrari, the first public lecturer on the subject in Italy. Of poets there was no lack; indeed, every man of culture tried his hand at least on a love sonnet to some fair lady. Amongst those whose poetry deserves special notice were the *tre generosi cavallieri* of the Court of Milan, Niccolò da Correggio of Ferrara; Antonio Fregosa, the soldier-poet of Genoa; and Gaspare Visconti, whose graceful, fantastic love lyrics were compared by his friends to those of Petrarch. In the free and constant intercourse of all these gifted people there arose a delightful enthusiasm for any new and interesting work. Thus we are told that when the famous Florentine, Angelo Poliziano, brought out his *Miscellanea* in Milan, the Duke's secretary Jacopo Antiquario one morning found all the clerks eagerly turning over the loose pages of this new book, and he in his turn became so eager about the *Miscellanea* that he forgot his duties.

Castiglione evidently shared the interest in this particular author, for we find him writing on a later occasion from his camp at the seat of war to have a book of Poliziano sent him from Mantua. We also learn from his letters that he possessed and played upon a variety of musical instruments; the viol is specially mentioned—a name given to several bowed instruments, following the mediæval fiddle, and coming before the violin. At Milan, where there were

teachers on every subject, he would have had excellent opportunities of learning music, as the priest Franchino Gaffuri was a most distinguished professor in the "Chair of Music." The Neapolitan musician, Serafino Aquilano, was famous for his improvisations upon the lute, and he delighted the Court of Milan with songs of his own composition. Castiglione had many other teachers at this time; for his education appears to have been carried out on the broadest lines. He learnt the rudiments of architecture under Bramante, and found a liberal education in art through his intimacy with Leonardo da Vinci and Cristoforo Romano. In after years he shows great familiarity with the works of Virgil, Tibullus, Propertius, Statius, Cicero, Xenophon, Aristotle, and above all with those of Plato, for which he had a special affection.

In his introductory letter to the *Cortegiano*, addressed to the Bishop of Viseo, he remarks:

"Some will say that . . . I thought to represent myself as the Perfect Courtier . . . unto such I will not deny that I have attempted all those studies which I assert that the Courtier should have knowledge of. . . . And I think that whoso hath no knowledge of the matters treated in this Book, however learned he may be, cannot well write of them; but I am not so deprived of judgment in knowing myself, that I should presume to think I know all that is desirable should be known. . . ."

## CHAPTER II

# THE COURT OF MILAN IN THE REIGN OF LODOVICO SFORZA

1494–1503

INVASION OF ITALY BY CHARLES VIII—BATTLE OF FORNOVO—DEATH OF COUNT CRISTOFORO CASTIGLIONE—CHARLES VIII SUCCEEDED BY LOUIS XII—FALL OF LODOVICO SFORZA—CÆSARE BORGIA TAKES URBINO FROM DUKE GUIDOBALDO.

As our theme is simply the intimate, personal, and literary history of "a Courtier of the Renaissance," we do but hear from afar the rumours of great events and the distant thunders of war as they reach the Court of Milan. The death of Lorenzo dei Medici had deprived Italy of a great statesman and peacemaker, and the election of the Borgia Pope, Alexander VI, was a presage of evil wherever his influence extended. But the most fatal enemy to his country's peace was Lodovico Sforza himself, when in the hope of furthering his ambitious schemes he sent ambassadors to persuade the wavering Charles VIII to invade Italy and take part in the internecine war against Naples. As we know, he succeeded only too well.

Yet, all unconscious of impending disaster, the gay Court of Milan was at this time one round of lavish and splendid entertainments. In 1491 Lodovico Sforza,

at the age of thirty-nine, had married Beatrice d'Este, the sister of Isabella, Marchesa of Mantua, a young girl of sixteen, who is described to us in the most glowing terms as a "mirror of Renaissance womanhood." Her coming to Milan had much the same result as that of Isabella to Mantua, for she dearly loved state and magnificence, and had a passion for every form of dramatic entertainment. Her home at Ferrara had seen the beginning of Italian drama, as distinguished from the earlier form of *sacra rappresentazione*, which were usually performed in the squares of the city or in a church. But these new classical and profane subjects were acted before the Court, usually with some amount of scenery and realism.

Thus when the *Menæchmi* of Plautus was represented, a boat with sails and oars and ten persons on board was made to move across the stage, and excited enthusiastic applause. The *Amphitryon* of the same author was given with musical interludes; there was a Paradise or Olympus represented, in which lamps took the place of stars, and little children were dressed as planets. Sometimes the classical plays were given in the original, but more commonly they were carefully translated. When Ercole of Ferrara came to Pavia, he brought a goodly company of young courtiers to perform a series of comedies. Thus they gave the *Captivi*, the *Mercator*, and the *Pœnulus* on three following evenings, and these entertainments often continued until long past midnight.

On one carnival, *Mopsa e Daphne*, the Pastoral play of Niccolò da Correggio, was performed with great appreciation, and besides various Italian plays there were splendid concerts, for on another occasion a com-

pany of wonderful Spanish musicians was sent to Milan from Rome by Cardinal Ascanio, and gave great delight to the assembled guests. It is impossible to convey a full impression of the glowing life and rich variety of entertainments, when gaiety reigned supreme in the city of Milan, and made Lodovico the idol of his Court. There were stately pageants whenever any illustrious visitor arrived, and splendid processions in which the common people could satisfy that southern joy in colour and sound and movement. As for those gay expeditions of noble lords and ladies from the sumptuous ducal villas near Milan, of which we have such full accounts in the letters of Messer Galeazzo and others, we read of fishing parties to Cussago enlivened on the way by music and singing, and of hawking by the river-side and over the low-lying meads with falcons whose skill and courage were a marvel to behold. Still more exciting were the hunting parties in the beautiful wooded valley of the Ticino, where we are told not only of stags, but of wild boars and goats, and even of an occasional bear or wolf . . . then "with much laughter and merriment" the gallant company would ride homeward through the evening shadows to close the day with feasting and dancing.

We picture to ourselves Baldassare Castiglione during the period of his many-sided education at Milan, and find him taking some share in the gorgeous life of the epoch, surrounded by poets, musicians, and scholars. We know that he was specially attracted towards Galeazzo di Sanseverino, one of twelve mighty brothers, most of whom became famous; a perfect knight, distinguished in all courtly exercises, skilled in art, and a brilliant scholar. He was only one in a galaxy of

talent, where the young courtier might listen to the singing of Gaspare Visconti the devoted admirer of Petrarch, or take his part in a poetic tournament with Niccolò "il gran Correggio," or talk of sonnets and of architecture with Bramante as he watched the building of the new cupola of Santa Maria della Grazie, or best of all, when he might look on in silent reverence, as Leonardo da Vinci painted his Cenacolo in the refectory below.

As for the delights of Milan itself, a few words of the contemporary Florentine Guicciardini cause them to stand out clearly before us: "The city is not only full of joy and pleasure, of feasting and delight, but so wonderfully is it increased in riches, magnificence, and glory that it may certainly be called the most flourishing and happiest of all the cities of Italy." Castiglione never forgot the vivid impressions of his youth, and looked back upon the Castello of Milan as "being the abode of the flower of the human race," and in his *Cortegiano* he alludes thus to the Duchess Beatrice: "Had you but known her, you would never more wonder again at a woman's talent."

Hitherto all had prospered with Lodovico, but the coming evil days were already casting their shadows for those who could read the signs of the times. Charles VIII had at length crossed the Alps and reached Asti, where the Duke of Bari and his wife hastened to welcome him with every token of joy and respect. Insignificant in person and plain in countenance, as we see from his portraits, which always look like caricatures, the French king showed himself most courteous in manner, and in accordance with the fashion of his country, kissed all the Court ladies,

beginning with Duchess Beatrice herself. His sister, Anne de Beaujeu, received most glowing accounts of the beauty and magnificent dress of these Milanese ladies, and great festivals had been arranged when Charles unfortunately fell ill of smallpox. On his recovery a splendid reception was given him at Vivegano by Lodovico, but, possibly reminded by Comines of his father's experience at Péronne, Charles asked for the keys of the Castle at night, while his guards watched the gates. The French king also insisted upon seeing Gian Galeazzo, the nominal Duke of Milan, who was very ill, and his wife Isabella, daughter of Alfonso of Naples, "very sorrowful." She threw herself on her knees before him, and prayed that he would spare her father and brother, only to receive the reply that it was now too late, and she would do better to pray for her husband and herself.

The King's forebodings were only too soon realised. Within a week the unfortunate young Duke of Milan was dead, whether by poison or not is one of the unanswered questions of history. Lodovico hastened back to Milan, and was at once proclaimed Duke in name, as he had long been in fact, for no one dared to assert the rights of Gian Galeazzo's infant son. Yet it is interesting to be told that in July, 1498, during the absence of Lodovico, when the small Duchetto used to ride about Milan, the little boys would run after him shouting "Ducha! Ducha!" As soon as his great-uncle heard of this, he wrote that the boy should be shut up in the Castello, and promptly put an end to these rides.

When Lodovico had received his investiture from the Emperor and was in undisturbed possession of the

*Anderson, Photo* *Luini*

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duchy, both he and his wife Beatrice would seem to have attained the height of their ambition. Yet in truth he was greatly disturbed by the unexpected success of Charles, whose arms were everywhere victorious. Still more serious was the presence of Louis Duke of Orleans with an army at Asti, as this was a standing menace. In his alarm, Lodovico approached the Venetians with the suggestion of forming a League to free Italy from the invading French. This was so much in accord with the general feeling that on Palm Sunday, 1495, the Pope, the Emperor, the King of Spain, Venice and Milan had joined this new League, which was publicly proclaimed in the Piazza of St. Mark. When Charles VIII heard the first rumour of this formidable alliance, he was revelling in the delights of conquered Naples, where, as Comines says, "he thought of nothing but pleasure." It was a rude awakening, but even then he scarcely realised the full extent of his danger.

Meantime Francesco, Marchese of Mantua, had been appointed to the supreme command of the armies of the League, and Count Cristoforo Castiglione, the father of Baldassare, served as a *condottiere* under him. The allied forces consisted of about 25,000 men, and the Captain-General wrote to his wife at Mantua: "I am at the head of the finest army which Italy has ever seen, that we may not only oppose but utterly destroy the French." We cannot dwell upon the tangled intrigues of the various States, or the hurried retreat of the King of France from Naples, so picturesquely told by Comines. "Hitherto in all this voyage we had no war; but now it began," he writes when, having with great labour and difficulty crossed the mountains and

reached Fornovo, the French army found its further progress barred by the enemy. Charles had not more than 9000 men with him, as he had left garrisons in the various conquered cities.

On Sunday, July 5, 1495, he encamped in the valley of the Toro, one of the four great river torrents which descend from the Apennines into the Emilian plain. Never has any battle been more vividly described, both from the French and Italian point of view, than that which followed the next day, when the French attempted to break through the encompassing host. The actual fighting scarcely lasted an hour, in the wildest confusion, amid thunder and lightning, while the rain fell in torrents. Attacked by the flower of the Italian chivalry, the French drove them back with much slaughter, in broken ranks; while the Stradiots and Italian infantry had soon left the fray to hurl themselves upon the royal baggage. We can well understand how from the French army came the warning cry, "Remember Guynegate!" that battle which they had lost in past days by turning aside to plunder the enemy's camp.

The Marquis of Mantua fought with splendid personal courage, but showed himself a very poor general, for with his immensely superior force he could not prevent the army of Charles from crossing the river and making good their retreat to Asti with all their artillery. Both sides laid claim to the victory. The Italian loss was very heavy, about three thousand, including the brave Rodolfo Gonzaga, and other nobles, whilst the *condottiere* Cristoforo Castiglione, Baldassare's father, never recovered from the wounds which he received, and died the following summer at Mantua. Comines puts down

the number of French slain as about a hundred, but this was probably an under-estimate. "God Himself was our guide, and led us home with honour," he adds; while Francesco of Mantua writes in a boastful letter to his sister, that he has "brought forth the liberation and liberty of Italy." Nor did his self-deception end here, as he caused Mantegna to paint for him a splendid votive picture, "La Madonna della Vittoria," in which he appears.

A noble character who rarely receives his due share of notice was Gilbert, Duke of Montpensier, the husband of Chiara Gonzaga, who had been left behind to hold Naples with less than 10,000 men, so that on the triumphant return of Ferrante the French were compelled to capitulate. Apparently forgotten by their king, they fought with desperate courage, but met with constant disaster until they were reduced to the last extremity by famine and disease. The brave Gilbert de Montpensier behaved like a hero to the last, for he refused all the persuasions of Francesco Gonzaga to leave his fever-stricken soldiers, and he died in their midst at Puzzuolo.[1]

When Cristoforo Castiglione returned home after Fornovo, we have every reason to believe that his son Baldassare was with him during his last illness. However absorbed the young scholar may have been in his new life, the claims of family affection were too strong to keep him at a distance from his home in that time of sorrow. His was essentially a home-loving, affectionate nature, as we see him in the whole course of his letters to his mother, taking ever the keenest interest in all

[1] For full details, see *Queen of Queens*, by Christopher Hare, p. 259. (Harper Brothers.)

that concerns his three sisters—Polissena, Francesca, and Anna—and his young brother Jeronimo.

There appears to be some uncertainty about the exact date when Baldassare first went to Milan; at least, one historian suggests that it was not until the year 1496, when he was seventeen years of age. But this statement is difficult to reconcile with the constantly repeated assurance of so many writers that the Mantuan youth was a pupil in Milan of the famous Latin professor, Giorgio Merula, who is well known to have died in 1494. It is possible that these two versions may be reconciled by supposing that when Baldassare Castiglione went to Milan after his father's death in June, 1496, it was his second term of residence in the city.

This is rendered the more probable when we remember in the *Cortegiano* his intimate remembrance of the Duchess Beatrice, whom he would otherwise scarcely have known, as she died early in January, 1497.

We must now return to a brief account of the history of Milan after the battle of Fornovo, in so far as it is needful for following the career of our hero.

After long and tedious negotiations, a peace was patched up, Novara was given up by Louis of Orleans, and, to the great satisfaction of all Italy, Charles VIII crossed the Alps and returned home before the end of the year. There were great festivities that Christmas at the Court of Milan, for Lodovico felt that fortune once more smiled upon him: he was delivered from all his enemies and rivals, and could look forward to a future of unclouded prosperity. Yet in truth from this time began the misfortunes which overwhelmed him in rapid succession. In the autumn of 1496 his

illegitimate daughter Bianca, the beautiful young wife of Galeazzo San Severino, died suddenly, to his great grief; and the following January he had to mourn the more bitter loss of the Duchess Beatrice, in the very prime of life and hope; she was but twenty. His sorrow may have been deepened by remorse for the grief he had caused her in devoting himself so much to Cecilia Gallerani and Lucrezia Crevelli. Yet he showed almost as much interest and affection for the children of these ladies as for the two sons of Beatrice, Massimiliano and Francesco.

Comines remarks that in Italy there was but little difference made between legitimate and illegitimate children, and we certainly find him justified at this period. Of the House of Este, the greatest rulers of Ferrara, Leonello and Borso—not to mention ten of their brothers and sisters—were born outside the pale of wedlock. In the House of Sforza the same held true of the great Francesco himself, seven of his daughters and four of his sons, and a large proportion of all his relations. There was no secrecy about such matters, for Cardinal Ippolyto dei Medici founded his claim to Florence on his being, although illegitimate, "at all events the son of a gentlewoman, not like Duke Alessandro, whose mother was a peasant girl." It is needless to give more instances, for the genealogy of every reigning family in Italy is complicated with similar details. If there were a good dowry, the fact of illegitimacy was scarcely considered in a marriage contract. So many near of kin were indeed always useful, as they formed a kind of clan for mutual protection and advancement—at least, when it was once firmly established who was to be head of the family.

Charles VIII of France died in April, 1498, and was succeeded by Louis Duke of Orleans, whose first thought and ambition was to plan a new campaign in Italy, and Lodovico was not slow in realising that Milan would be the first point of attack. In the hour of his triumph it had been Il Moro's proud boast that "Pope Alexander VI was his chaplain, the Emperor Maximilian his *condottiere*, Venice his chamberlain, and the King of France his courier to come and go at his bidding." Now all was changed, and in his deepest need he had scarcely an ally whom he could trust in Italy, and none whose succour arrived in time; while outside there was but the doubtful friendship with the Sultan and the support of the distant Emperor Maximilian. We have no space to dwell upon the oft-told tale which has been so fully dwelt upon elsewhere,[1] of Lodovico's downfall and the victorious campaign of Louis XII. The end had come when on that sad autumn day of 1499 the Duke sent away his two little boys under the care of his brother Cardinal Ascanio and their governess Camilla Sforza, followed by a long train of baggage mules bearing his most precious jewels and his treasure of 240,000 gold ducats. He joined them two days later on his way to Maximilian in the Tyrol, and the French at once entered Milan.

It is noteworthy that immediately after Louis XII began hostilities, the relations of Baldassare Castiglione showed their anxiety that the young man should return to Mantua and enter the military service of Francesco Gonzaga. On April 27, his uncle, Giovanni Pietro da Gonzaga, wrote to the secretary of the Marchese, who was then at Naples, alluding to the great loss which

[1] *Ladies of the Italian Renaissance*, C. Hare. (Harper Brothers.)

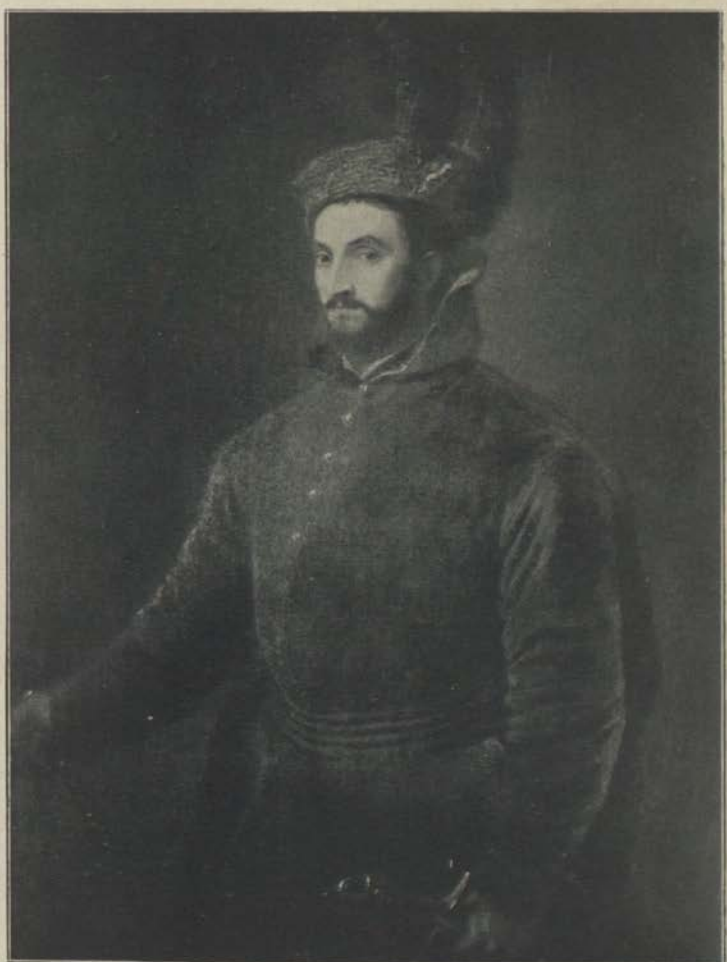
the Magnifico Cristoforo had been to his prince, and offering his son, "who is now at Milan," to the service of "His Magnificence," that he may follow in his father's steps. The next we hear of young Castiglione is when the Marchese Francesco, in his eagerness to bow down before the rising sun, set forth in haste from Mantua to welcome the coming of the French king with a numerous escort. However, he was met by a message from the provisional government, and having at their request sent back the greater part of his company, he was very glad to have done so when he found how expensive lodging was at Milan! His own house had been looted in the disorder of the French occupation, and his people had much difficulty in cleaning it and borrowing a little necessary furniture; we hear that Count Gilberto Borromeo lent him "trois lits garnis." When the Marchese—careful man!—found that he had already spent 300 ducats in honour of the King, he reduced his escort still further, keeping only with him Luigi Cesare de Gonzaga, Baldassare Castiglione, and Uberto de Glinbere.

On the 29th of September he went to Pavia to await the coming of Louis XII, and two days later he had the satisfaction of receiving a visit from his nephew Charles of Bourbon, Duke of Montpensier. Chiara Gonzaga, the mother of this splendid young prince of seventeen, had taken up her abode entirely at Mantua after the death of her husband, and dwelt there until her death in poverty and seclusion. Meantime the boy Charles seems to have had many friends at Court; we hear of him as the playfellow of François, the future king, and he was almost adopted by the great Anne of France, who watched over his education and had be-

trothed him to her only daughter Susanne, the heiress of Bourbon.

On the 2nd of October, 1499, the Marchese of Mantua, with young Castiglione in his train, rode two miles outside the town in very heavy rain to meet the King of France, and afterwards with Ercole of Ferrara, and many other Italian princes, formed part of the conqueror's triumphal progress into Milan, where the last act of treachery had already taken place by the base surrender of the great Castello. On the 8th of October, 1499, Castiglione writes a most interesting letter to his brother-in-law Messer Jacomo Boschetto, who had married his eldest sister Madonna Polissena. He gives a vivid description of the triumphant entry into the city with flying banners and trumpets sounding, the horsemen in green and red, five hundred archers on foot with the same colours, the men-at-arms and the splendid guard of the French king, said to be entirely composed of knights and gentlemen. Next rode the King's Majesty Louis XII, attended by his general Trivulzio, the Duke of Ferrara and his sons, with most of the princes of Italy, "our Marchese Francesco" riding beside the young Duke of Montpensier, while there followed a sumptuous train of "lords and gentlemen without number, prelates, Milanese, and many strangers passing through the decorated streets to the great Castello."

On the following Monday there was a solemn Mass at the church of San Ambrogio, attended by all the lords above mentioned, the Mass being sung by the Bishop of Piacenza. On Tuesday morning "il Signor nostro," with two or three cavaliers, each bearing a falcon on his wrist, accompanied the King's Majesty



*Hanfstaengl, Photo* *Titian*

CARDINAL IPPOLITO DEI MEDICI

To face p. 32

into the country, where they had a day's hawking. "We hope that now our matters will greatly prosper," concludes Castiglione, much impressed by this special sign of friendship towards the Marchese of Mantua.

The French king certainly appears to have forgotten his ally's most crooked position in the past, and to have loaded Francesco with honours, enrolling him in the service of France at a salary of 12,000 francs. Most of the other princes who had crowded to welcome Louis XII received very different treatment, and had to pay heavily for his protection.

Calmly considered, we cannot admire the conduct of either Francesco Gonzaga or his wife at this crucial moment. They proved themselves to be arrant time-servers. Only a few months before, Lodovico Sforza was their dearest friend; there was a constant interchange of affectionate letters and presents between them; but now they were both ready to cringe before his conqueror and take a part in all the rejoicings over his fall. Moreover, it was always Isabella d'Este's way, when her friends happened to be cast out of their homes, to grasp with greedy haste at all their most cherished possessions which she had probably coveted for years. In the case of any ordinary woman of our acquaintance such behaviour would be condemned as heartless. Thus the Marchesa wrote to Antonio Pallavicino, who had so basely betrayed his lord, imploring him to lose no time in securing for her a marvellous clavichord of Beatrice's which had always been an object of envy to her. Now that the cause of Lodovico was irrevocably lost, she hastened to pay her court to the French king, and with her usual diplomacy suc-

ceeded in gaining his favour. Yet it must be set down to Isabella's account that she received her exiled friends with kindly hospitality, so long as their presence at Mantua was no source of danger to herself.

As we only touch upon the history of Italy in so far as it is connected with the fortunes of Baldassare Castiglione, we pass over the next few months until the final disastrous effort of Lodovico to regain his duchy, when Francesco of Mantua, in spite of his close alliance with France, sent his brother Giovanni Gonzaga to fight on the side of his brother-in-law. This breach of faith well-nigh proved his ruin, for Louis XII had serious thoughts of taking Mantua from him and exchanging it with Venice for Cremona and the Gera d'Adda, but finally the matter was compromised by a large money payment of the contrite Marchese to the French king. We know how, after the fatal siege of Novara, the hapless Il Moro expiated his treason to Italy by that long living death in the Castle of Loches—"a narrow prison thus enclosing the thoughts and ambitions of him whom first the boundaries of Italy could scarce confine."

Yet if Baldassare's present lord escaped his deserts, the future friend and master of the young courtier was in deadly peril, as Pope Alexander was triumphantly carrying out his plan of building up a great Italian kingdom for his son. He began by publishing Bulls declaring that Rimini, Pesaro, Imola, Forli, Urbino, and other States of Romagna were forfeited to the Holy See, their tribute being unpaid. This was in 1500, the year of Jubilee, when the pilgrims to Rome saw with dismay Cæsare Borgia receive the Golden

Rose, and heard him hailed as already conqueror of Forli and Imola. Amongst the visitors to the Sacred City was the pious Elisabetta, Duchess of Urbino, and as her House was under sentence of destruction, Francesco Gonzaga had been anxious to dissuade her from the perilous journey; but fortunately his sister performed her pilgrimage devotions safely, under the protection of her Colonna friends.

There was indeed cause for alarm, as before the Jubilee year was over, Cæsare had set forth on his conquering passage through Romagna with a great army, paid for by the alms of the pilgrims and the sale of twelve Cardinals' hats at the September Consistory. A new and startling piece of diplomacy on the part of the Borgia Pope gave a brief respite to all who were akin to the Este family. It was nothing less than the marriage of his daughter Lucrezia with Alfonso, the heir of Ferrara, to which the proud Duke Ercole was compelled to submit. Duke Guidobaldo received the twice-widowed bride in the doomed palace of Urbino, and the Duchess Elisabetta conducted her with kindly courtesy in her state progress across the mountains and by river ways, past the ravaged cities of Romagna to the gorgeous wedding at Ferrara which was to set the seal on Alexander's triumph. This was in January, 1502, and the gracious lady of Urbino was but ill repaid for her courteous escort when, within a few months, Cæsare Borgia treacherously and suddenly invaded her husband's dominions, and the whole duchy was lost in a day.

It so chanced that Elisabetta had been paying a most enjoyable visit to Venice with Isabella d'Este, and had only returned with her in June to her villa near

Mantua, when Duke Guidobaldo arrived there as a fugitive, having barely escaped with his life by a midnight flight, and had since been hunted from place to place. Both Francesco and his wife received the illustrious exile with every expression of sympathy, and it was very probably on this occasion that Baldassare Castiglione—then in his home at Mantua with his mother, Isabella's inseparable friend—first made close acquaintance with his beloved future lord.

All her pity and love for her near relations could not change the Marchesa's nature. With her sharp eye to business, she lost no time in trying to secure her share of those priceless treasures in the palace of Urbino—paintings, statues, tapestries, gold and silver plate, books and manuscripts . . . which the brigand Cæsare was at that moment carrying off as his spoil, by long processions of mules, from the hill city. With her usual excellent taste, the lady had set her heart upon a beautiful antique Venus and a Cupid of Michelangelo, which the conquering Borgia sent to her at once, with other marbles, by his Chamberlain. It may be noted here that, when Guidobaldo once more regained his home and begged for the return of his much-valued statues, Isabella made a polite excuse for keeping them in her own possession.

Following the chronicle of Baldassare Castiglione, we find him the next month, July 21, 1502, at Vigevano, in the suite of the Marchese Francesco, who had once more gone to meet Louis XII and conduct him to Milan. Here the victims of Borgia treachery, the lords of Urbino and Pesaro, in vain sought the French king's help, for Cæsare promptly arrived and made close alliance, defensive and offensive, with His Majesty,

who was also pleasantly entertained with feasting and dancing.

France and Spain were soon about to enter upon a bitter contest for the spoils of conquered Naples, and in order to gain the help of the Pope, Louis was quite willing to connive at the aggressions in central Italy of the Borgia, whom he had already made Duke of Valentino. We cannot enter into the varied fortunes of this disastrous campaign, but after the French defeat at Cerignola in April, 1503, which decided the possession of Naples for Gonsalvo di Cordova, the Great Captain, Louis XII raised another army under the command of La Trémouille, which was joined by an Italian contingent under the Marchese of Mantua. In the course of his knightly training, young Castiglione served in his company, and had his first experience of real warfare under the most trying circumstances. The French army and its allies were opposed and beaten back at every point by Gonsalvo, the great Spanish Captain, "whose marvellous genius and magnetic influence over his men seemed to make them invincible, in spite of being half-fed, without pay, and in the midst of a hostile and desolated country."[1]

In August the whole of Christendom was thrilled with exultation by the sudden death of Pope Alexander VI. There was a pause of suspense in the contending armies of France and Spain, which both drew near Rome to control, if possible, the election of the new Pope. The result was a compromise, but the infirm old man Pius III lived barely a month, and was succeeded on October 31, 1503, by Giuliano della Rovere, who took the title of Julius II. This warrior

[1] *Queen of Queens*, C. Hare, p. 323.

Pope, "who made his tiara a helmet and his crosier a sword," seized the reins of power with a strong hand and completely overthrew the Borgia policy.

Meanwhile a serious misfortune had befallen the French army in the illness of its general La Trémouille, when the chief command fell to Francesco of Mantua, a soldier of great personal courage, but a very poor leader. He had not shown much enthusiasm so far, as the news of Pope Alexander's death reached him far off from the scene of action, and we know from a letter of Castiglione's, that some of his young officers were apparently waiting his orders in Rome at the beginning of October. After many delays and some desperate assaults on various fortresses, the two armies at length took a stand on either bank of the river Garigliano, the ancient Liris which falls into the Gulf of Gaeta. In this marshy swamp, amid heavy rains, when the soldiers on both sides sickened and died of disease and famine, the Marchese Francesco fell ill, and being no longer able to endure "the pride, the discord, and the disobedience of the French army," threw up his command and obtained permission to return home. The young Count Baldassare, who appears to have been in his immediate suite, departed with his lord, and was suffered to attain his heart's desire by paying a visit to Rome, that splendid city, the chosen abode of art and learning, which as with a magnet drew all kindred souls within its walls.

## CHAPTER III

### 1503-1506

DEATH OF POPE ALEXANDER VI—DUKE GUIDOBALDO REGAINS URBINO—CASTIGLIONE LEAVES THE SERVICE OF FRANCESCO, MARCHESE OF MANTUA, TO TAKE ARMS UNDER GUIDOBALDO OF URBINO—GONFALONIERE OF THE CHURCH—LIFE IN CAMP—LETTERS OF BALDASSARE CASTIGLIONE TO HIS MOTHER—AT THE COURT OF URBINO—A MISSION TO ROME.

THE death of Pope Alexander VI and the fall of the Borgia power had far-reaching consequences, and, by a side issue, had great influence on the life of Baldassare Castiglione and his migration to the Court of Urbino.

The startling news within a few days reached Venice, where Duke Guidobaldo and his wife had received a hospitable welcome in September, 1502, nearly a year before, when the Gonzagas could no longer offer them a home at Mantua. Guidobaldo lost not a moment; he set forth at once for Urbino, where his loyal people drove out the soldiers of Cæsare Borgia, and received their Duke with acclamation. In one day the whole duchy returned to its allegiance, and the enthusiasm of the hill-city knew no bounds. The children crowded to greet their exiled lord bearing olive branches, and hailing him with songs; mothers brought their babes in arms, old men wept for joy, and the universal triumph

was so great that Castiglione says: "The very stones seemed to rejoice and sing."

Other cities of Romagna followed the example of Urbino in throwing off the Borgia yoke, but a fresh difficulty arose, for Guidobaldo was now in the pay of Venice, and it was evident that there would be a struggle between the Republic and Pope Julius for possession of the dominions of Cæsare. Thereupon the Duke of Urbino went to Rome on the 21st of November, in obedience to the summons of the Pope, his friend and near kinsman, in order to discuss this difficult matter, and it was settled that Guidobaldo should courteously resign the service of Venice, leave Urbino under the rule of his Duchess, and himself remain for some months at the Papal Court. We have a Venetian letter telling how "there came into the presence of the Signori the Duchess Elisabetta with Madonna Emilia and her company of maidens to take leave, for she is departing home early to-morrow morning; she goes in a bucentaur by the Po as far as Ravenna, and from thence on horseback; and the Doge spake her fair, and, having taken leave, we Sages of the Order accompanied her as far as the palace gates, and she proceeded along the Merceria, reaching home on December 2." The seneschal of the Duchess relates how "after suffering from bad weather, bad roads, and bad hostelries," the gracious lady was welcomed back with even greater joy and affection than her husband, the people thronging down the hill to meet her four miles from the castle gates of Urbino.

In the meantime, we are chiefly interested in the fact that while Duke Guidobaldo remained in Rome for the

winter, he renewed his acquaintance with Castiglione, and won his devoted affection. This alone may have been a sufficient reason for the young courtier's desire to enter the Duke's service, in which a friend and kinsman of his, Cesare Gonzaga, was already enrolled. But it is quite possible that there were other causes which made Baldassare desire a change of patron. Francesco of Mantua does not strike us as a very noble or amiable character; he was rough in manner, often surly and ill-tempered, and had very small share in his wife's intellectual tastes. Indeed, he wrote to her once about his little son that "he did not mean the child to have much book-learning." That the Marchese was a brave soldier was not enough to win the whole-hearted allegiance of so cultured and many-sided a character as Castiglione, who found in the gracious, high-minded scholar and gentleman, Guidobaldo, a friend and master after his own heart.

In any case, on May 27, 1504, the Duke of Urbino writes a most courteous letter to the Marchese of Mantua, saying that as he is forming a company of men-at-arms, he prays His Excellency to permit Baldassare Castiglione to enter his service. This was the cold brief answer, which gives a hint of Francesco's wounded pride, but scarcely prepares us for the vindictive hatred which he long felt for his former favourite:

"Illmo. Sig. Duca. Quando a Baldassare de Castione piacirà il venire a servire V. Sig. per la parte nostra siamo molto contenti e se in altro la possemo compiacere siamo più che mai disposti. Gonzaga, 9 Junis, 1504.

"FRANCESCO GONZAGA."

Baldassare also wrote a most respectful and submissive letter to the Marchese, stating his wish to serve the Duke of Urbino, but expressing his intention to be entirely guided by the will of His Excellency, and signing himself "Di V. ra Ex^tia^ fidelissimo Servitore, Baldassare Castiglione. Mantua, 10 June, 1504."

The Marchese of Mantua thus replied:

"Baldassare. As we have replied to the Sig. Duca d'Urbino when he asked permission to be your leader, thus we say again to you that in regard to us, we are content that you should serve him, and we give you good permission. Respects (Reveri). 11 June, 1504."

It was quite true that Guidobaldo was forming a company of men-at-arms, for Pope Julius had just appointed him Gonfaloniere of the Church, with a yearly pay of 7000 ducats, that he might subdue the citadels of Romagna which the Castellans still held in the name of Cæsare Borgia, notwithstanding his abject submission to the Pope and the Duke of Urbino. The closest bond between these two last was their young nephew, Francesco Maria della Rovere,—son of the Pope's brother Giovanni, Prefect of Rome, and the Duke's sister Giovanna. This lad of fourteen was acknowledged as his successor by Guidobaldo, who was tenderly attached to him. The young Prefettino, as he was called, had recently returned from France, where he had taken refuge from the Borgia plots, and had been page of honour to Gaston de Foix, receiving from Louis XII the distinguished Order of St. Michael.

When Guidobaldo set forth on this expedition, his nephew accompanied him and Castiglione, with a com-

mand of fifty men-at-arms. Already Fanc, Faenza, and Rimini had surrendered, and the garrisons of Cesena and Bertinoro soon came to terms. But an unfortunate incident occurred, as when Baldassare was going to the camp before Cesena, his horse fell and he received a severe injury to his foot. With characteristic fortitude he remained in the field, but possibly on this account the accident had more serious results, and he suffered from the wound for a long time afterwards. He mentions it in a very interesting letter to his mother, written at the siege of Forli whose Castellan, in secret understanding with Cæsare, still stood out, unmoved by threats or bribes:

"12 August, 1504. Alla Magnifica e Generosa Donna, M. Aloisia da Castiglione. Madre sua Onoranda." . . . He is glad to hear about the new little nephew, and sends friendly greeting to the father and mother (Tommaso Strozzi and Francesca). . . "According to the conditions . . . I have provision from the Illustrious Sig. Duca of 400 ducats for my person, and 50 men-at-arms . . . with a companion who will probably be M. Cesare Gonzaga. . . . The detestable enterprise of this Rocca [fort on a rock] will cost us dear, as all this country has done . . . it is a pity. I have touched no money yet, but I think that I shall have 100 ducats to-day, as I have heard the Sig. Duca received 1000 ducats yesterday. . . . Sebastian cannot know much about me . . . because the first day I went to Cesena I had other things to think about than my condition. This foot has made me see the stars in the middle of the day. . . . I wish I were free from pain, which I certainly am not; if I go very gently it does not hurt me, but I can do no other. . . . I have

sent you several letters. . . . I pray Magnificenza Vostra to be of good cheer, as I am . . . and although I grieve at being so far from my country and so many people whom I love, yet I content myself in the midst of these troubles with having a quiet mind . . . ed alla M. V. mi raccomando" (which may be somewhat freely translated, "and to Your Magnificence I send loving greeting").

I have already alluded to the keen home feeling of Castiglione, and his warm interest in all that concerned his family and friends in Mantua. Of his three sisters, Polissena the eldest had been married some time to Messer Jacomo Boschetto, Francesca married the learned Tommaso Strozzi of Mantua, and the youngest, Anna, who appears to have been his special favourite, was brought up for the cloistered life. We have also constant allusions to the young brother Jeronimo. But the close love and perfect confidence which existed between Baldassare and his mother is proclaimed in every page of his private letters, of which so great a number have been preserved. It was one of those intimate, perfect friendships "which have mastered Time"; a sympathy so complete that years of absence could not dim it, and distance was no barrier, for the son had found in his mother a faithful comrade to whom he could pour out his soul alike in sorrow and in joy, and her reign was unchallenged until his latest breath.

All the years of his happy childhood were spent under her watchful care, and it was Madonna Aloisia who moulded his youthful tastes and guided the course of his varied studies. A woman of cultivated tastes and high attainments herself, she rejoiced in the boy's

responsive eagerness and talent, and when the opportunity occurred for him to complete his education at the Court of Milan, she suffered no personal feeling of natural affection to keep him with her at Mantua. A worthy descendant of Farinata degli Uberti, the great Ghibelline chief, she could show courage herself, and make any sacrifice in later years to advance her gallant son's knightly training. After her husband's death, Madonna Aloisia was left in charge of her son's patrimony at Casatico and other parts of Mantuan territory, and although the revenue rarely sufficed for the heavy claims which Castiglione's high position made upon it, with his lord always deeply in his debt, yet his mother never shrank from her heavy task, but met all his appeals with unfailing devotion. A knight *sans peur et sans reproche*, as we may almost venture to call him, Baldassare proved himself worthy of such a mother's love, and these letters seem to run like a silver thread through the whole texture of his ever-changing life. We find a curious simplicity in them; there are no repeated professions of affection, for between these two the half-spoken word was understood, and there was no need to fan the flame of love. It is interesting to note the respectful form of address which the son always uses—"Magnificenza Vostra," shortened to "*M. V.*," or "Vostra Signoria"—"*V. S.*," "Alla Magnifica e Generosa Donna," "Madre Sua Onoranda," etc.

All the letters of Baldassare Castiglione—of which several hundreds may still be seen in various collections—are delightful reading, for he gives a vivid picture of the manners and customs of his time, and his clear insight into the striking events and characters around him is often tinctured with genial humour, and,

above all, with that Christian chivalry which makes the best of every one. But there is a special charm about his *lettere famigliari* in which, amid his own splendid and adventurous career, he finds leisure to sympathise with every domestic event in his family; to congratulate a sister on the birth or progress of a little son, to take a deep concern in the ambitions of his younger brother Jeronimo, to inquire after the well-being of old retainers, and above all to send constant loving messages to his sister Anna, the future nun. We can quite understand that when dowries had been found, probably with some difficulty, for the two elder sisters, Polissena and Francesca, it was necessary to economise on the youngest girl by placing her in a convent, and with this view she would probably be brought up in an especially saintly way; indeed, we are told of this Anna that "her life was more angelic than human." In great Italian families it was the usual thing to have at least one daughter a nun; we find that the Marchesa Isabella, the great friend of Madonna Aloisia, devoted two girls to the conventual life: Ippolyta, who entered the Dominican Convent of S. Vincenza, and Livia Osanna, who, like Anna Castiglione, became a Poor Clare in the Convent of Santa Paola of Mantua.

Amongst other points which strike us in the Castiglione letters, one is the great difficulty and expense of sending them by special messenger, and their insecurity, for they might be lost or fall into other hands, and there are frequent warnings not to write anything confidential—that must be conveyed by word of mouth. We marvel at the great cost of knightly arms, accoutrement, state garments, and needful jewellery for cour-

tiers; we are also surprised at the large amount spent in presents to cardinals, ambassadors, and others. It must be remembered that at this period almost every one was willing to accept bribes, and that as there were no convenient bank-notes, these had to be given in the ponderous and barefaced form of a long train of mules bearing treasure. A splendid rider in an age when this was the first essential of a gentleman, Baldassare appears to have had a large establishment near Casatico for the growth and "manège" of young horses, and we have constant mention of his buying well-known coursers, and of his sending some special groom to try the various horses and select one for his own use. It is curious to notice in passing how very short of money all these great nobles and magnificent knights seem to have been, as a chronic condition.

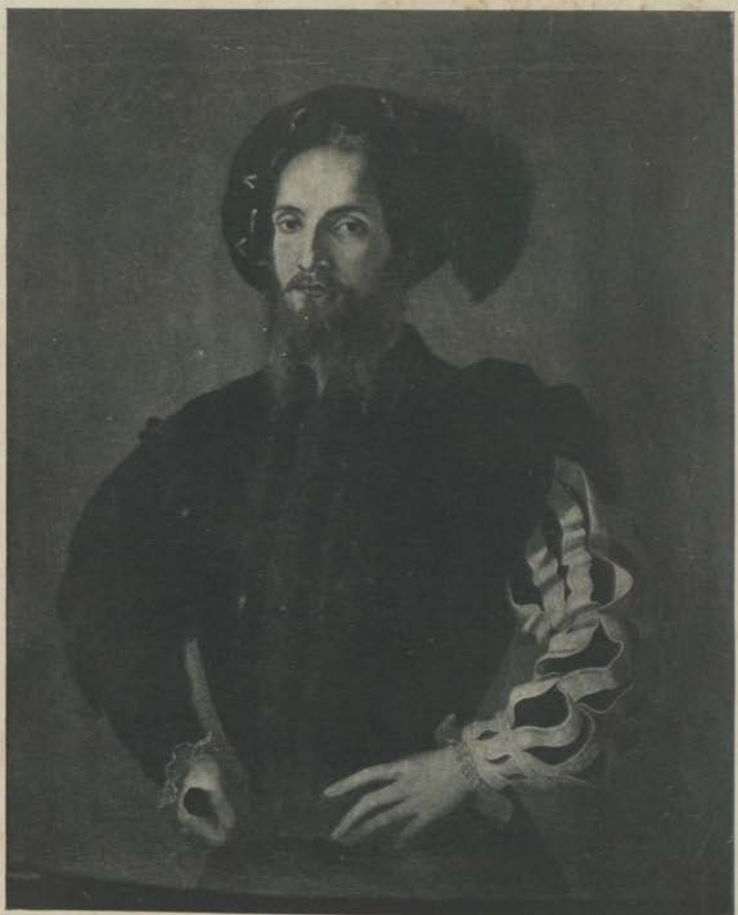
Before the end of August, 1504, the citadel of Forli was at length surrendered; the castellan is said to have received a direct order from Cæsare Borgia, who was promised his freedom on that account, but the great Gonsalvo was compelled to break his word and send his prisoner to Spain, where he passes out of our story to exile and death. On the 9th of September Castiglione wrote thus to his mother from Urbino:

". . . You have heard of our having at length arrived at Urbino, by the Grace of God, safe and sound, on Friday last, the 6th . . . with great joy, for we all desired to come here. What little we have been able to do in that short time, we have done in setting the house in order. . . . La Sig. Duchessa and Madonna Emilia send you greeting. . . . My foot is getting better, but very slowly. I would pray you to send me some fine white cloth for a pair of hose, as it

is not to be had here, and also the couple of emeralds [an escutcheon of his], and ask Jeronimo to send me the 'Stanze Volgari' of Poliziano . . . e alla Magnificenza Vostra mi raccomando."

If young Castiglione had to set his house in order, how much more was this the case with the Duke and Duchess, who had returned to find their stately home robbed and despoiled of all its splendid treasures. But by degrees they had the satisfaction of recovering many of their precious possessions, especially the greater part of the famous library. But the priceless tapestries of the Trojan War were lost for ever, and so were many other exquisite works of art, such as the Venus and Cupid which Isabella d'Este insisted on keeping. There were great doings at Urbino that September, 1504, for the Archbishop of Ragusa arrived as Papal Nuncio that he might solemnly present to Guidobaldo the ensigns of command as *Generalissimo* of the Pope's army. There was another magnificent ceremony in the Duomo to proclaim young Francesco Maria successor to his uncle's duchy, when all the deputies took their oath of allegiance to the young prince.

From this time we may date the commencement of "the few golden years" of Castiglione's life. The palace of Urbino, built in its "hard and sharp situation" on the summit of a rock, became for him a kind of "island of the blest, the abode of mirth and joy and high philosophy," to which he looked back with tender memories all the rest of his days. The young courtier was received with special favour by Elisabetta Gonzaga, the peerless Duchess, "whose idolater he forthwith became." She was the sovereign of all the galaxy of



*Anderson, Photo* *Raphael*

CÆSARE BORGIA

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talent, brilliant cavaliers, poets and scholars, musicians and artists, who visited the Court of Urbino or sought a home there. Of all these Castiglione has painted for us so vivid and splendid a picture in his *Cortegiano*, which we shall dwell upon fully hereafter, that any mere historical description would be flat and tame.

Of Baldassare himself at this time we have a most striking and attractive portrait. He is spoken of as very handsome in face and person; of great stature, well formed, and of fine proportions, with "quite a royal presence." He was light and dexterous, an adept at all games of strength and skill, a splendid horseman, a good fencer, and a most graceful dancer. His ready wit and eloquence, his literary taste and real learning never unduly put forward, made him a popular member of society in the most distinguished Courts of Europe. Moreover, he was "liberal and generous beyond his means, magnanimous, religious, modest, of admirable integrity and great prudence." Such was the verdict of his contemporaries on this "Admirable Crichton" of his day.

Castiglione was in high favour with Duke Guidobaldo, and was constantly employed in missions of high trust. Thus during this autumn of 1504, we find in his letters to his mother that he was hoping to see her at Mantua, but this plan is abruptly checked, evidently by the ill-will of the Marchese towards him. He thus writes: ". . . I am not going to Mantua, which I never think of without a grey hair coming, and if it were not for M.V. [his mother] I would never give a thought to the place. . . ." At this time Duke Ercole was very ill, and as it was important to find out how the succession was likely to go, Castiglione was to be

sent to Ferrara. He arranges that an old Mantuan friend, Il Falcone, now tutor to his brother Jeronimo, should meet him there. In December he writes from that city, and speaks of his warm reception from the Illustrissimi Alfonso, Ferdinando, and Giulio da Este, the sons of the Duke, and also from Madonna Lucrezia Borgia, the wife of Alfonso. She inquired after his mother and sisters, and desired to be kindly remembered to them.

All Italy was on the alert when good Duke Ercole died, on January 25, 1505, but his son Alfonso succeeded to the duchy in peace, and rode at once in state through Ferrara, clad in white, the ducal crown on his head, with the Visdomino of Venice on one side and on the other Cardinal Ippolyto, the brother whose intrigues had been most feared. There was a heavy storm of wind and snow at the time which, in the light of after events, was looked upon as an omen of trouble. Pope Julius was by no means pleased with the new Duke's devotion to Venice, as Castiglione soon had occasion to hear, for his next letter is dated from Rome, where Guidobaldo was suddenly summoned by the Pope.

". . . I went with the Duke as far as Narni, and there his gout was so bad with a little fever that he was unable to continue his journey. . . ." He was ill when he left Urbino, but Julius had sent a special litter for him, hung between two beautiful dappled horses. After about nine days Guidobaldo made a great effort to reach Rome, and arrived in bitterly wintry weather at S. Maria del Popolo, where Castiglione tells us that they slept outside the gate, and next morning made a solemn entry into the city. Amongst others, the Duke was met by Sigismondo Gonzaga, Bishop-elect of Mantua,

brother of the Marchese Francesco. There is a new note of caution in this letter:

"I cannot tell you the fresh matters, as they do not belong to Mantua. . . . Do not write anything which everybody may not read, as many letters are intercepted. . . . Tell M. Jacomo that M. Galeazzo his brother is well. M. Cesare and I are lodged in San Pietro, in the house of the Cardinal da Este. . . . All quite well, and without a quattrino in the world. . . ."

On January 22, Castiglione writes:

"As I know that la Magn. Vostra likes to have letters, I am moved to write, although I have no new thing to tell. . . . Here in Rome, four days out of five there blows a bitter wind . . . it was at first so mild that roses were seen everywhere as in May. . . . Many dramas are performed in Rome; these cardinals and prelates never miss one. For my part, they do not please me much. . . . I have great thirst for letters from home . . . since I left Ferrara I have had none. . . . I beg you M. V. to write of our special matters . . . and M. Tommaso nostro and M. Francesco, and M. Aloisia da Gonzaga to write to me and not to consider my infinite worthlessness. And even if I am debtor for several letters, since I kissed the Pope's feet I am absolved from all obligation for past things. I send greeting to friends, especially to Suor Laura [the name taken as a nun by his young sister Anna], and the Magnifico M. Jacomo Boschetto . . . e sempre mi raccomando. . . ."

In the next letters he remarks: ". . . To our Suor Laura I know not what to send; if some cavalier could and would carry them, I would send her the candlesticks which the Pope gave me on the day of Sta. Maria

Candelora, but they would be broken. The Confessional of M. V. will be prepared and sent to her in any case. . . ." (Before the Council of Trent, only the Pope could grant a faculty to confess to any priest, and to be absolved 'da casi anche riservati.")

On March 2, 1505, we hear that "On Wednesday last, February 26, were celebrated the obsequies of the great Queen of Spain, of happy memory—[Isabel of Castile]—according to the fashion of Spain, in the church of S. Jacomo de' Spagnuoli. All the cardinals were robed in 'morello scuro' and all the ambassadors and Sig. Duca mio with mourning garments down to the ground. Francesco della Rovere wore black velvet. . . ." A few days later, this young prince, who is usually called the Signor Prefetto, was solemnly betrothed in the Sala of the Pope, in presence of all the cardinals, to the Signora Donna Leonora da Gonzaga, the young daughter of Francesco of Mantua and Isabella d'Este, born on the last day of 1492. This gave great satisfaction to the friends on both sides, but the marriage did not take place until November 25, 1509. We have a picturesque account of the King of Poland sending an embassy to do obedience to His Holiness, of three ambassadors, one bishop, one chamberlain, four Tartars with strange furs, and fifty cavaliers. The cardinals were in their robes, and the ambassadors wore red gowns with feathers in their caps, and a design of pearls.

In a later letter we are told that a great Mass was celebrated, and the Golden Rose was given to the Polish ambassadors for their King Alexander. In return they gave splendid presents to the Pope: three beautiful great vases of Sitou, well gilt; and three splendid

garments: one of white damask linen trimmed with sable, one of crimson satin trimmed with ermine, and the third made with about 150 sables—so beautiful that there was nothing in Italy to compare with it.

Castiglione takes great interest in the ambition of his young brother Jeronimo to obtain an appointment at a great Court. He will try to find some opening in Rome, but "all offices seem to be bought here. Yet although we are poor in money, we ought to have some influence. . . . I would have Jeronimo not take Orders, but be free in Rome to reach high office, as we hope he may deserve. . . . Show him the part of this letter which refers to him, but not the rest." He adds: "About the going to England, Sig. Duca must send some one, and I have heard that he wishes to send me. The cause of the mission is for the confirmation of the Privilegio of the Order of the Garter, which is like that of St. Michael of the King of France. . . . It is too long to tell it all . . . a great ceremony is needed. . . . Although the journey is long, 'pur e piace-vole. . . ." (yet it is pleasant). Henry VII sent the Order of the Garter to Guidobaldo, Duke of Urbino, as a delicate compliment to Pope Julius, his kinsman.

Before the end of March the matter was settled with regard to Baldassare being chosen for the mission, and he hopes to travel in company with Monsig. Vescovo de' Gigli (Silvestro Gigli Fiorentino, collector for the Apostolic dues in England, where he has a rich bishopric). Castiglione hopes to fulfil the task honourably and satisfy His Excellency Sig. Duca. On his way he proposes to stay with his mother at Mantua for eight or ten days.

This expedition was put off again and again; finally,

it was not until the autumn of 1506 that Castiglione was sent "to be installed in his lord's name as Knight of the Garter by the good pleasure of Henry VII." (Guidobaldo's father, the Duke Federico, had been made a Knight of the Garter by Edward IV.) There is frequent allusion to this journey; it could not be until after the great "Mostra" which would take place on the day of St. Peter in the piazza. . . . Also it was needful that Castiglione should be a cavalier, and the Pope would knight him on Easter Day, 1505. . . . Jeronimo is not forgotten. We hear that Rome would be an education for him, and he would learn to overcome his shyness and timidity. Jeronimo is asked to find in the house and send at once some curious ancient armour for wearing on the arm and other things to give to the Rev. Cardinal de' Medici (afterwards Leo X), "to whom we owe so much."

It was an age of presents! The King of Portugal about this time sends more rich gifts to Pope Julius, chiefly of animals not seen much in Italy, parrots (pappagalli), cats, hares, and monkeys of various kinds, and many other things of his country. . . .

On June 6, Castiglione writes that he does not wish to alarm his mother, but he has had a bad fever, the cause of which he cannot imagine.

It was evidently a serious illness, and appears also to have affected his injured foot, in which he suffers violent pain, and he expresses his wish to go to the Baths of Siena. "The 'Confessional' of Magn. Vostra is prepared and signed, and I will bring it with other devotional things . . ." he adds, eagerly looking forward to the meeting with his mother. The letter from Rome on July 30 is a touching lament for the death of his friend

Il Falcone, which occurred at Mantua. He is deeply grieved, and desires to know all particulars. "Fortune does not permit me to pay him save with tears. Pray Jeronimo, for the love he bore him, to collect all his writings and not leave them in the hands of others. . . ." Here we note one striking feature in the character of Castiglione. He had a very genius for friendship; and to all those favoured beings whom he took to his heart he ever remained loyal and true, with a passionate devotion, undimmed by time or misfortune.

We next hear of him at Gubbio, where he had the pleasure of meeting Nostro Signor of Urbino, on his way to the Baths of S. Cassano, from whence he writes at the end of September: ". . . I have been here for my foot, which has never healed properly, and the waters have done me much good. . . . Sig. Duca Guidobaldo has been very ill . . . the poveretta Signora Duchessa has been in great fear and anxiety . . . but God did not ordain such ruin. . . ."

Throughout all these letters we find constant allusion to the young courtier's want of money to meet the very heavy expenses of his position. His nominal pay was 4000 ducats besides allowances, but in point of fact, it was not until the end of the first year that he received 25 ducats on account, the Duke of Urbino, on his return to a pillaged home, being in great straits himself. Baldassare is very cheerful and good-tempered about his want of money, but it is evidently a constant anxiety, and he takes special interest in the harvest on his estate and the prospect of selling some of his horses. He is often "without a quattrino," has to borrow thirty gold ducats for ten bracchi of

black velvet, and when he left Rome he still owed about 150 ducats.

On December 24, 1505, Castiglione writes from Ferrara that he has been sent on an embassy to Mantua by the Duke of Urbino, but has been warned not to enter the Mantuan territory, as the Marchese Francesco has not forgiven the leaving his service, and intends to arrest and punish him. This is a terrible disappointment to the devoted son, who had been so earnestly looking forward to meeting his mother. He himself was quite willing to run the risk, but on January 6, 1506, he informs M. V. that "he has been recalled by the Duke and Duchess, who value him too much to expose him to any peril." He complains that since he was going as ambassador, he should have been respected on that account. He has to send the "Confessional" to his mother by a messenger. We are told that Isabella d'Este pleaded in vain for him, and we receive a very bad impression of her husband's vindictive temper. Guidobaldo appears to have forgiven Francesco, as he was taken into the service of the Pope a few months later for his campaign in Romagna, by the advice of his brother-in-law, who also invited him to meet Julius II at Urbino in the autumn of 1506. The Pope was delighted with his easy triumph over the Baglioni of Perugia, and came to the hill-city in high good temper, accompanied by twenty-five cardinals with a splendid suite, and a guard of 400 men-at-arms. Outside the walls he was received by a company of young nobles in doublets and hose of white silk, who on his dismounting seized his richly caparisoned mule, which had to be redeemed for 60 ducats. This was a usual but un-

comfortable piece of *courtesy!* The city gates were thrown down to receive the Pontiff, the keys were presented to him, he was conducted by the Duke, the Court, and the clergy through the gaily-decorated streets to the Duomo, and then to the magnificent palace, "whose like was not to be found in all Italy."

The stately visit of Pope Julius and the high favour which he showed to his kinsman Duke Guidobaldo is the high-water mark of pomp and prosperity for the State of Urbino. This "coming of Rome" to the hill-city seemed to Isabella d'Este such a "rare and excellent thing that she looked on with hidden envy at the grandeur" of her sister-in-law, the Duchess Elisabetta. No one could foresee that the highest glory of this Court of Urbino, in the eyes of posterity, would be the chronicle of the young courtier, the scholar, poet, and philosopher, Baldassare Castiglione.

## CHAPTER IV

1504-1508

BALDASSARE CASTIGLIONE AT THE COURT OF URBINO, THE "HOME OF MIRTH AND JOY"—A GALAXY OF TALENT—THE ORIGIN OF THE "CORTEGIANO"—CASTIGLIONE'S MISSION TO ENGLAND TO RECEIVE THE "ORDER OF THE GARTER" FOR THE DUKE OF URBINO—EMBASSY TO LOUIS XII AT MILAN—ILLNESS AND DEATH OF GUIDOBALDO, DUKE OF URBINO—GRIEF OF THE DUCHESS ELISABETTA—FRANCESCO MARIA DELLA ROVERE SUCCEEDS TO THE DUCHY.

IT has been finely said that "any historical description of the Court of Urbino is rendered vain by Castiglione's enduring portrait of it in his *Cortegiano*. . . . He was an artist, not an annalist, and sought to embody the most brilliant qualities of Renaissance Court life in one convincing model."[1] In the "atmosphere of social ease, the free wit and sweet conversation of an amiable and loving company," the presence of the Duchess harmonised and tempered all the sparkling conversation.

As a literary work the *Cortegiano* will be fully dwelt upon later, but for the moment we are concerned with the life of Castiglione himself, and the happy years which he spent in this "abode of mirth and joy." He occupied his leisure in writing Latin and Italian poetry and in devising entertainments for the cultured society of the Court. Thus at the Carnival of 1506, the

[1] Walter Raleigh.

eclogue *Tirsi*, which he had written in collaboration with his friend Cesare Gonzaga, was performed before the ducal company. In this pastoral fantasy, the two authors under the characters of Iola and Dameta meet a stranger shepherd who bears the name of Tirsi, and describe in glowing language the whole circle of Urbino, with the Duchess reigning supreme over all as Goddess of the river Metauro. The eclogue is enlivened with the usual choruses and a brilliant Moresque dance, consisting of a mock fight with blunt daggers, carried out in measured tread, keeping time to the sound of music.

Amongst the galaxy of talent in that courtly society, we must select a few for special notice. Of the Duchess Elisabetta, to whom all looked up with reverence and devotion, the author of the *Cortegiano* scarcely ventures to speak, save as of one beyond all words of praise. Brought up in an atmosphere of art and scholarship, she inherited a taste for letters from a line of distinguished ancestors, and her sweetness of nature lent a special charm to her learning and accomplishments. Next to this princess and her inseparable companion was the Lady Emilia Pia, sister of Giberto Pio, lord of Carpi, in Lombardy, and widow of Antonio, half-brother to Duke Guidobaldo. She was a special friend of Castiglione's, and we find her constantly mentioned in his letters. He says, "She was endowed with so lively a wit and judgment, that she seemed the mistress and leader of all the company." We see her ever willing to lead off any new and sparkling discussion with constant charm and ever ready tact.

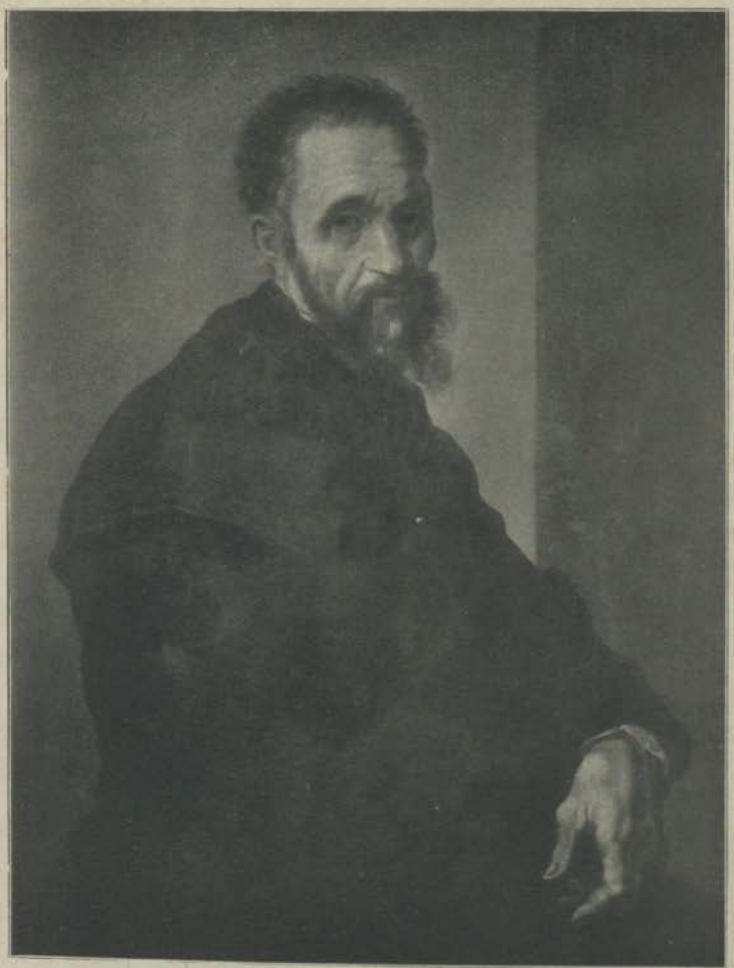
Amongst the younger ladies we notice Margherita Gonzaga, a niece of the Duchess, and Costanza Fre-

gosa, a connection of the Duke's. Her two brothers, Ottaviano and Federico Fregoso, of a noble Genoese family, had been brought up at the Court of Urbino; the elder brother was a distinguished soldier, who gallantly defended S. Leo during a long siege, and became later Doge of Genoa. His brother Federico was educated for the Church and was made Bishop and Cardinal, but when his brother the Doge needed help, he was quite ready to command an army for Genoa, or lead her fleet against the Barbary pirates.

Perhaps the most distinguished in rank of the Urbino circle was the Magnifico Giuliano de' Medici, third son of Lorenzo of Florence. During several years of the exile of his family he enjoyed the splendid hospitality of Duke Guidobaldo. We shall see him taking an honoured place in the gay and learned conversations of the *Cortegiano*, his name is enshrined in Bembo's prose and Ariosto's verse, while his splendid monument by Michelangelo in the Medicean Chapel is a mystery and a wonder for all time.

The distinguished Venetian writer, Pietro Bembo, was an ornament of the Court of Urbino for some years after 1505, and plays a very important part in the learned dissertations, as he is chosen for the high-priest of the Platonism of the Renaissance, and some of the finest passages are supposed to be spoken by him. He became an intimate friend of the Magnificent Giuliano, and followed him to Rome in the days of the Medici Pope, Leo X, when we shall have occasion to meet him again.

Another follower of Giuliano was Bernardo Bibbiena, so called from the little town in the Val d'Arno; a man of distinguished wit and talent, who later be-



*Hanfstaengl, Photo* *By himself*

MICHELANGELO

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came Cardinal, and achieved high success in life by more than doubtful means. His famous comedy of the *Calandra*, brought out at Urbino in 1508, had more than all the licence of Plautus, and with regard to his morals, it would be a mild term to call them Epicurean. He, too, was a member of the splendid literary Court of Leo X.

Count Lodovico Canossa, a cousin of Castiglione's mother, may have come to Urbino on this account, and he became in high favour later with Pope Julius II. In his mouth is placed the striking argument for nobleness of birth in the *Cortegiano*, with which we know that Castiglione had such deep sympathy. When a bride was suggested to him suitable in every other respect, the slightest doubt thrown on the pedigree of her ancestors for several generations was enough to decide him against the match.

We will add a few words concerning one more of the distinguished men who flocked to the Court of Urbino, the famous *littérateur* Bernardo Accolti, who from his birthplace was known as l'Unico Aretino. He was held in the highest esteem by the cultivated world of his time, and became an unquestioned authority on the art of poetry, although we may find it difficult to admire his own verses which have survived to this day.

Amongst other names mentioned in the *Cortegiano* were Cesare Gonzaga, the intimate friend and companion of Castiglione, Count Gaspar Pallaviciono and Lodovico Pio, young soldiers, Gian Cristofero Romano the famous sculptor, and Sigismondo Morello da Ortona, an elderly courtier.

This brief notice must suffice for the present, as we

shall meet with all these characters again when they play their appointed part in the pages of the *Cortegiano.*

But if for a time Castiglione enjoyed his leisure in such literary society, we find him so much in high esteem with Duke Guidobaldo that he was chosen for any important embassy. In the letters, we have already seen frequent allusion to the Order of the Garter which had been bestowed by Henry VII on the Duke of Urbino, and for which it was necessary that a proxy should be sent to England to be installed amongst the knights of that noble Order. Baldassare Castiglione had long been chosen for this stately mission, and after much unlooked-for delay was on the point of starting, when a great sorrow befell him in the death of his young brother Jeronimo, in this summer, 1506. A letter of condolence to him from Cardinal Sigismondo Gonzaga has been preserved:

"Magnifice Vir, amice noster charissime. We are greatly distressed to hear from your letter the unforeseen and premature death of your brother Jeronimo, who was beloved by us for so many reasons. The misfortune and great loss to your mother and yourself, deserve indeed the greatest sorrow. But because we believe you both to be so wise, knowing that for death there is no remedy, we exhort you to a noble patience, with the remembrance that by this road we must all travel. But it is superfluous to commend this to your mother; because for her we have such great honour and reverence, knowing her to be a matron dowered with every virtue.

"Go in peace on your journey, which we pray God may prosper according to your desires. . . . Et bene valete. *Ex Marengo* viii. *Augusti* MDVI."

Deeply as he felt the loss of his only brother, Castiglione was not one to suffer any personal grief to interfere with his duty. Therefore, in fulfilment of his lord's command, the Count at length set forth with a splendid suite, on July 24, 1506, bearing with him rich presents for the King of England, amongst which were some wonderful falcons, three of the finest race-horses of the Urbino breed, and a most precious little picture by the great master Raphael, of St. George, who has his knee encircled with the Order of the Garter, as patron saint of the stately society. With such a unique distinction for a saintly personage, this must have been painted by special command.

The Embassy took the route by Lyons, from whence Madonna Aloisia at Mantua received a letter dated: "In Lione. September 20, 1506. . . . We are resting here four days for the sake of the horses, after crossing the mountains. . . ." Thus Castiglione writes to his mother, knowing how anxious she would be for news, and adds: "I rejoice that M. Tommaso is well, and grieve for M. Jacomo and Madonna Polissena. May they bear in patience such inevitable sorrow. . . . Loving greeting to Suor Laura. To-morrow morning, please God, we set forth on our journey. . . ."

Anstis gives the following interesting account of his landing at Dover:—

"The 20th of Octobre, the 22d year of our soverain lord, King Henry VII, there landed at Dover a noble ambassadeur, sent from the Duke of Urbin, called Sir Balthasar de Castilione, whiche came to be installed in his lord's name; whiche Duke had receyved before by the Abbot of Glastonbury and Sir Gilbert Talbott,

being the King's commissionaris, the Garetier, &c., to the Ordre apperteyning. And, to mete with the said ambassadeur, was sent Sir Thomas Brandon, havyng a goodly companye with of his owne servants, all verely well horsed, unto the see-seyde; whiche, after they met togedre, kept contynnually compagnie with hym, and when they approched nere to Deptford, ther met with the forsaid ambassadeur by the King's commandement, the Lord Thomas Dokara, lord of St. John's and Thomas Writhesley, alias Gartier princypall king of Armes. Whiche lord of St. John's had in his compaignie thirty of his servaunts, all in a lyvery new, well horsed, every one of his gentlemen beryng a javelayn in his hand, and every yeman havyng his bowe and a sheffe of arrowes, and soe convoyed hym to his lodging, and on the morrow unto London. And by the waye ther met with the said ambassadeur dyvers Italyens, as the Pope's Vicecollector, Paulus de Gygeles, with dyvers others, and soe conveyed hym to the Pope's Vicecollector's hows, wher he lodged."

Castiglione writes that on the 1st of November he reached London, the capital of England, safe and sound by the Grace of God, honourably accompanied (as we have seen). "I went to see His Sacred Majesty the King, who received me with great honour and caresses . . . and each day does more, so that I hope to satisfy Signor Mio. . . ."

The ceremony of installation of Guidobaldo, Duke of Urbino, as Knight of the Garter, took place on November 10, and afterwards the Count visited the other knights in the name of his master. King Henry VII appears to have been charmed with him,

and on his departure presented him with a gold chain or collar of SS links, from which hung two portcullises and a golden rose with its centre of silver. This was greatly prized, and preserved as an heirloom in his family. Baldassare also received other valuable presents, chiefly horses and dogs. He next writes to his mother from Milan, where he had arrived safely on February 9, 1507, and sends a respectful message to ask "Sig. Marchese if he will permit me to come to Casatico to see Madama mia Madre . . . and this to show respect, and perhaps he may suffer me to go to Mantua . . . by his good grace, to which I submit. . . ." The consent of Francesco of Mantua appears to have been grudgingly accorded, for Castiglione had the satisfaction of meeting his beloved mother and his family at Casatico, after nearly three years' absence.

Urbino, 5 March, 1507. Castiglione relates how much honour he has received from the Duke of Urbino, and his warm welcome from other lords who are glad to have him back. Then he describes a second visit of Pope Julius to his kinsman Guidobaldo, after taking Bologna from the Bentivogli, and we are told of all the great splendour and magnificence of his reception. In the *Cortegiano* he thus mentions this visit:

"After Pope Julius II had, with his own presence and by help of the French, brought Bologna into obedience to the Apostolic See again . . . in his return towards Rome took Urbino in his way, where he was received as honourably as was possible, and with as sumptuous and costly preparation as could have been possible in any other city of Italy. So that

besides the Pope, all the Cardinals and other courtiers thought themselves thoroughly satisfied." The Duke and his young nephew, the Signor Prefetto, conducted the Pope as far as Cagli on his homeward journey.

Two months later Castiglione was sent on another mission, this time to the French king, Louis XII, who had come in person to Italy to put down a rebellion at Genoa. This was soon accomplished, and with his ally, Francesco Marchese of Mantua, he entered Milan in triumph, and it was here that the ambassador from Urbino followed him. We have most vivid accounts of the state and magnificence with which the King held his Court at Milan, where every State in Italy sent ambassadors to congratulate him, and there were the most splendid tournaments, banquets, and balls.

The Papal Legate arrived in haste, there were cardinals in plenty, and amongst other great ladies came Isabella d'Este, a favoured guest, with her seven-year-old son Federico, who was destined to play so large a part in the future career of Baldassare Castiglione. Charles de Bourbon, Duc de Montpensier, "our nephew, was there," Isabella says, "a tall youth of handsome and majestic appearance, closely resembling in complexion, eyes, and features his mother," Chiara de Montpensier, who had died in want and obscurity at Mantua in June, 1503. How many memories of the past must have awakened in the mind of Castiglione in the midst of all these sumptuous festivities in the city of Il Moro, but still more we should imagine in the heart of Isabella d'Este, when she thought of her fair young sister Beatrice queening it in those very palaces? Yet we are told she was the gayest of the gay, and proud above all things of the

admiration of Louis XII! Did she never give one thought to her unfortunate brother-in-law, still lingering on and enduring his living death within the French dungeon of Loches?

The Count had returned to Urbino by the 16th of July, when he announced to his mother that he found the Duke and Duchess well. He had not written before on account of the expense of messengers. A little later we find that he has a curious difficulty in obtaining a "licenza" for certain goods to be sent him from Mantua, as they would have to pass through the Romagnan possessions of Venice. This goes on for months, and he calls it "questa benedetta licenza"; but when at last his clothes, accoutrements, horse-trappings and armour, etc. have started from Mantua, he is not more successful. He writes on January 5, 1508, that the ship has had many misfortunes; there has been delay in starting, and at last it cannot get farther than Rimini in this bad weather. Now he has a very interesting piece of personal news. A wife has been suggested to him, a daughter of M. Giulio da Martinengo, Cavaliere of Brescia . . . "and the one who spoke to me was Madonna Alda Bojarda. . . . I gave her some hints, that the quality must be good and also the dowry, say about 14,000 ducats . . . but I know no more. . . ."

The next letter is dated from "Forosempronii," the old name for Fossombrone, about twelve miles from Urbino, and he remarks about his new secretary, "Questo putto e scempio di una scempiezza profontuosa e matta. . . ." (This youth is stupid with a profound and mad stupidity!) It is quite a satisfaction to find that this "very perfect knight" can occasionally lose his

temper like ordinary mortals, as also when he alludes to "that blessed passport" which the Venetians worried him so much by not sending. A few days later we have more allusions to a mysterious suggested bride, whose name he has not been told, although he has heard about the condition of her House and her dowry. "He would like to go for a fortnight to Ferrara or Poggio to meet his mother and discuss many things. . . ."

The Count was at Fossombrone in attendance on the Duke of Urbino, who had been in failing health for years past. He had been borne hither in a litter at the beginning of February, in the hope that this lovely, sheltered sunny spot, on the bank of the Metaurus, would be better for him than the hill-city of Urbino, in that bleak spring weather. But Guidobaldo rapidly grew worse, and on April 11, 1508, Castiglione writes:

"We are all in great trouble; the Sig. Duca Guidobaldo is dangerously ill . . . the loss will be very heavy, especially for the poor Signora Duchessa, whom I have served so long. May God help her. . . . I believe the Sig. Prefetto will succeed in peace to this State. . . ."

These forebodings of coming sorrow were only too soon justified, for that very night the good Duke passed away. He was only thirty-five, but he had suffered so much that he welcomed death, and kept his calm serenity to the end. When he had received the last rites of the Church, he remained in pleasant conversation with Castiglione, and at the very last recited to him a favourite passage of Virgil (Georg. IV, 478). Thus in intimate fellowship with noble spirits of the past could

this polished scholar forget the pain and weariness of the present.

The sorrow and loss was for those who were left to lament the beloved Guidobaldo. Elisabetta was heart-broken, and it was long before she recovered enough to take any interest in her widowed life. Castiglione, who deeply mourned his lord, gives a most touching and dramatic account of the long sad funeral procession, passing slowly through that night of "mysterious dread," when the wailing of the mourning people was echoed back from the mountains, as the lord of Urbino was borne by torchlight across the valley and up the steep ascent to his hill-city. In gloom and darkness his subjects came forth through the gates to meet him for the last time, headed by the Bishop and priests in solemn order—monks and friars, guilds of the city, sorrowing men and women, all crowded to do him honour in death whom they had so often welcomed in life. After the usual lying-in-state and stately funeral ceremonies, Guidobaldo was laid to rest by his father's side in the little church of the Zoccolanti Friars.

A pathetic account of the Duchess in her first days of bereavement is given in a letter to Isabella d'Este from her secretary. "I saw this illustrious Madonna in the midst of her women, in a room with black hangings, all the windows shut, and only lighted by one candle on the ground. She was seated upon a mattress on the floor, her face covered with a black veil . . . and it was so dark that I could scarcely see. . . . She held my hand, and we both wept. . . . I gave her V. E.'s letter, and spoke my sympathy in few words. . . . The new Duke was there . . . he treats her with the reverence of a son. . . ."

The new Duke was Francesco Maria della Rovere, the nephew and adopted son of Guidobaldo, who had been at once proclaimed Duke of Urbino, and succeeded quite peacefully, notwithstanding all fears to the contrary. Castiglione had been sent to Gubbio to keep order there, as he tells his mother in a letter of April 29. After expressing his great sorrow at the loss of "Signor mio Padrone," he adds: "When Magnifica Vostra wrote, I was at Gubbio, as there was fear of disturbance there, with so many enemies . . . but all went well, and my men were extremely obedient. . . . I returned to Urbino in tears and gloom (nelle lacrime e nelle tenebre). I believe that I shall remain with the new Duke on the same terms, and also M. Cesare . . . and we will not fail to serve the Duchess and Duke to our uttermost. . . ."

Thus closed the happiest years of Castiglione's life, for now all was changed in that cultured "home of mirth and joy," and in the service of Duke Francesco, a youth of eighteen, far more serious duties awaited the distinguished courtier, soldier, and ambassador.

## CHAPTER V

### 1508-1511

FRANCESCO MARIA DELLA ROVERE, DUKE OF URBINO—HIS BETROTHAL TO LEONORA GONZAGA—VARIOUS MARRIAGE PROPOSALS FOR COUNT BALDASSARE CASTIGLIONE—LEAGUE OF CAMBRAY—CASTIGLIONE FIGHTS UNDER DUKE OF URBINO—SENDS NEWS FROM THE SEAT OF WAR TO HIS MOTHER—HIS ARMOUR, TENTS, ETC.—VENICE DEFEATED AT THE BATTLE OF AGNADELLO—FRANCESCO OF MANTUA TAKEN PRISONER TO VENICE—MARRIAGE OF FRANCESCO MARIA TO LEONORA GONZAGA—POPE JULIUS II MAKES PEACE WITH VENICE—1510, A YEAR OF BATTLES—CASTIGLIONE'S LETTERS FROM THE CAMP.

IN the light of future events it is curious to note the watchful interest taken by Pope Julius in the succession of his nephew, Francesco Maria della Rovere, to the dukedom of Urbino. The young prince was installed with great pomp after High Mass in the cathedral. First the keys of the city were presented to him in a great silver basin, then he was clothed in the ducal mantle of white satin lined with gold brocade and a cap faced with ermine surmounted by the coronet, and rode slowly through the narrow winding streets, on a superb charger richly caparisoned, amid the joyous shouts of the people. So great was the enthusiasm of his new subjects that a papal brief was sent to congratulate them on their loyalty.

Never did a reign open with greater promise than for this lad of eighteen. He had received the most careful

classical education, he had spent several years at the cultured Court of France, he had been treated with the warmest affection by Guidobaldo and the gentle Elisabetta, and yet the inherent savageness of this spoilt child of fortune was only covered by a slight veneer. Scarcely a year before it had suddenly broken forth, when a dashing favourite of the Duke's had given cause for gossip concerning the gay young widowed sister of Francesco, who, believing the worst, in sudden rage had the offender straightway murdered. A similar outburst in the future almost proved his ruin, Pope's nephew as he was! Still, in spite of his passionate temper, Francesco Maria had many good points, amongst which was his unfailing affection and respect for his widowed aunt, the Duchessa Elisabetta.

It may have been her influence which induced him to pay a courting visit to his betrothed bride, Leonora Gonzaga, at Mantua that summer. He evidently needed persuasion, for Giovanni Gonzaga writes to him that at the Court of the Marchese Francesco he will see not only the fairest of maidens, but also the most splendid horses in the world. The young Duke set forth on his visit, in the wise old way, with presents in his hands; an historic scimitar for the Marchese, and for the Lady mother, Isabella, rich horse-trappings which had once belonged to Cæsare Borgia. From a curious account of his interview with the charming little maiden of fourteen, brought up in a home which was the complete epitome of Renaissance elegance, we gather that he was really more at his ease in the meadows of the Tè, amongst the fine horses which he could entirely appreciate.

In truth we are less concerned with the lord of

Urbino's courting than with various marriage proposals of this period for his distinguished friend the Count Baldassare Castiglione. All his friends appear to have come to the conclusion that a courtier so admired and successful, who had attained the ripe age of thirty, should no longer be suffered to remain a bachelor. From the Duchessa Elisabetta and the Cardinal de' Medici downwards, we find a variety of suggestions on every side. In his letters we have already heard of two maidens belonging to the Martinengo House of Brescia, and in May of this year, 1508, Castiglione writes to his mother that his friends in Rome are proposing a marriage for him with the Signora Clarice, daughter of Piero di' Lorenzo de' Medici, and niece of Cardinal Giovanni (later Pope Leo X) and of the Magnifico Giuliano. Bibbiena was then secretary of the Cardinal, and was greatly interested in the matter. In his stately pride, Castiglione himself thinks that negotiations ought to come from the Marchese of Mantua or the Duke of Urbino. "M. Cesare is in Rome, and I will ask him to inquire about the dowry and see the lady if possible. . . . On the other hand, the mother Alfonsina degli Orsini, who is fond of her daughter, thinks that Mantua is too far from Rome. . . ."

The next letter continues: "The dowry would be 4000 gold ducats . . . there might be more, but that is certain . . . she is well connected on both sides. There is always hope that the Medici may be restored to Florence. . . ." [They were expelled in 1494, and they returned in August, 1512.] "I pray Magnificenza Vostra to think well of these things and give me her advice. There will not want means to carry it out. . . . Some-

thing has been said about another Martinengo . . . perhaps M. V. may hear about it? . . ."

In June we hear more about this marriage. . . . "The dowry is rather small . . . not enough for the position which I shall have to keep up; now I can manage, but with a family it would be different. . . . I should like to inquire more about the Martinenga . . . only daughter of 'una buona città' [Brescia], which would be nearer to us. . . . I can say that I have a nest which has never failed me, and a 'facultà' [talent] which makes all labour easy. . . I have decided to keep the matter open a little . . . to consider. . . . I pray M. V. to advise me. . . ."

The marriage with a niece of the future Pope, which might have made so great a difference in Castiglione's fortunes, was never destined to come to pass. Six months later he writes to his mother:

". . . You will be sorry to hear that there have been intrigues about Signora Clarice de' Medici on behalf of Filippo Strozzi. . . ." [It appears that her aunt Lucrezia Salviati had persuaded the family that an alliance with the Strozzi would strengthen their influence, but the Cardinal was much disappointed, as Baldassare was his choice.] . . . "Do not trouble, for these matters are in the hands of God, and often that which we hope for and which should have been for our happiness, might have turned out to the contrary. . . . I believe that all is for the best. . . ." He repeats again later in another letter: "Do not trouble, for things will happen other than we hoped. . . . M. Cesare told the Signora Duchessa that Conte Filippo Borromeo left two daughters with good dowries. . . . Sua Ex. has written to inquire most particularly about

the matter. . . . If Magn. Vostra has a way of knowing anything about it, so much the better. . . ."

Before dismissing the subject of these futile marriage negotiations, we must allude to a later one which touches a higher note of pride and honour. Castiglione tells it thus:

"In passing through Modena, Il Conte Sigismondo and Mad. Costanza both spoke to me of this alliance (with a daughter of Conte Girardo Rangone), and I replied that it would please me . . . but it seemed to me that Conte Girardo was a little reserved . . . and if he thought I was not worthy to have his daughter, I would not desire her. . . . It appears that Conte Girardo had replied that I pleased him much, but . . . I had my suspicions that he wished to place her higher. . . ." In short, he broke off the negotiations in this characteristic way: "The wife that I am to take, be she who she may, I desire that she should be given to me with as good a will as I take her withal, yea, if she were the daughter of a king."

We must turn aside from this alluring subject of personal and domestic interest, for the grim reality of war is upon us. On December 10, 1508, the League of Cambray was signed, in which, by a secret understanding, all the Powers of Europe combined for the ruin of Venice. We are only concerned with it from the point of view of Pope Julius II, who made his nephew, the young Duke of Urbino, Captain-General of the forces of the Church. There was a long outstanding conflict between the Papacy and that proud city of the Adriatic, whose ambassador, having once been asked by the Holy Father what warrant his Republic had for their ocean rule, replied with splendid

audacity: "If you will show me the deed which assured to the successors of St. Peter the lands of the Church, you will find on the back of it the title-deed of Venice to the dominion of the sea."

Yet although Julius meant to be "Lord and Master of the Game of the World," and was in reality the mainspring of the League, he did not join openly in the war until he saw his allies committed to it. This was on the following April 27, when he summoned the Venetians to surrender the cities of Romagna within twenty-four days, under pain of excommunication, interdict, and all the thunders of the Church. No time was lost, for Castiglione, who had his usual command of fifty men-at-arms under Francesco Maria, writes on May 1 from Brisighella, at the head of the valley of Lamone:—

". . . Yesterday, which was Wednesday, we arrived here and found the country round already taken and ravaged by a Spanish company of ours, and in possession of the fortress, in which were Sig. Gio. Paolo and two other Captains, who were all taken prisoners, and also the Castellan. Thus without any labour of ours all the valley of Lamone is in our hands . . . we are going on by Faenza. . . ."

Then comes a pressing appeal to his mother to send as soon as possible some of his horses from Casatico. He particularly wants a good war-horse, as il Buffone had stuck a nail in his foot, and "besides, he is not safe since his last adventure. . . ."

By means of these intimate letters we find ourselves behind the scenes, and learn not only the immense importance of good horses to the knights of that day, but also the extreme care which they took to keep

up the supply. Thus the Count writes a few months earlier: "See that great care is taken of my colts when they 'serano levati dall erbe.'

"I pray you to see that if possible they may be ridden by Brusco or Scardova, whom I will send to choose from them. . . ." Or again: "I pray M.V. to let me know how my horses are, and possibly all may be ridden except those born when I was in England . . . they must be very carefully ridden. . . ." "I should like to have a horse belonging to Cardinal Sigismondo . . . and I think that I shall manage it as he wants a grand horse for himself, and I have one, Ubino, which the King of England gave me, very handsome and good. . . ." "Those horses of M. Uberti I do not think will suit me; they are too young. I want a horse made (fatto) with a brain. . . ."

Castiglione is also extremely particular about his armour and weapons. He writes for a certain coat of mail which he left at Mantua, and for various curious pieces of armour "which he sorely needs." He requires later a complete suit of armour to be made for him at Mantua and is troubled at the delay in its coming. "I extremely desire to have my arms. . . ." "I think the armour must be made by this time. . . . I am in extreme need, almost unarmed . . . there is nothing in the world more important to me. . . ." Then we have interesting directions about his new camp equipment required, "for it is always in use, and gets worn out . . . the tent is to be a 'trabacca' and not a 'padiglione.'" This refers to the shape, and apparently it is not to be the usual form of pavilion. ". . . The 'allogiamente' of which I wrote is to be of 'berettino' (from *birrus*, red?) and tan colour (tane)." There

are other interesting details too long to quote, but for all these matters and for the keep of his men and horses, money is constantly wanted and very difficult to procure.

After the fall of Brisighella, Castello Granarolo was taken after sharp fighting on May 6, and on May 18 Castiglione writes "Ex Castris, Russi," and on the last day of the month from the Camp near Ravenna:

". . . I have received your letter and the money . . . infinite thanks. Our successes continue . . . with very little 'fatica' we have acquired all Romagna . . . having driven back all our enemies. . . . All the land is terribly impoverished . . . 'Dio governa tutto!' A Venetian Secretary came to us who offered to give up freely Ravenna, Cervia, and Arimino, saving the people who are therein, the artillery and munitions. . . . Faenza we already have. We have caused great destruction and evil to this poor Ravenna . . . in the country round . . . what I could do to prevent excesses, that I have done. . . ."

The unfortunate Venetians were in no position to make terms of any kind, for on May 14 they had been totally defeated at the battle of Agnadello, and the power of the Republic, which had taken 800 years of strenuous toil to build up, was crushed in one day. The Pope regained all the towns which he claimed in the Romagna, and the French took possession of the whole of Lombardy as far as the Mincio, and Verona, Vicenza, and Padua gave themselves up to emissaries of the Emperor.

The campaign was practically over as far as the Papal Captain-General was concerned, and he was glad to return to Urbino, for the Legate, Cardinal

Alidosi, had acted with constant bad faith and opposed all his plans. Count Castiglione appears to have had a serious illness, for he writes to his mother in September, 1509: ". . . I fear that I shall not be able to travel, as my foot is so bad. . . . I hope little by little to recover my strength, but health does not come suddenly, as the evil does. . . ."

Urbino, November 19. "Illa Signora mia is going to Mantua . . . [with Madonna Emilia Pia to bring back to Urbino the young bride, Leonora Gonzaga, her niece, who was to be accompanied by the mother of Baldassare Castiglione.] I pray you render infinite thanks to the Signora mia for all her kindness during my illness, and also Mad. Emilia Pia; if I had been her son or her brother she could not have done more. Also for love of me, give a piece of linen cloth to an old woman called Margherita, to whom I am especially grateful . . . and make much of her; give to my servant, cloth for a pair of 'camiscie' [under garments] and a 'beretta' [cap] such as may please him, for indeed he served me well. . . ."

Much had happened during the Count's illness. For Venice the tide had turned; in July Padua was recovered and Monselice; while in August the Marchese of Mantua was surprised and made prisoner at the Isola della Scala, near Legnano. He was taken to Venice in great triumph, with all the magnificent spoils of his camp, which included "some of the finest horses in the world." The Marchesa Isabella was in despair, and made pitiful appeals to the Emperor Maximilian, the King of France, and even to the Sultan, to obtain her husband's release, offering the most costly presents on every side. But her chief hope

was in Pope Julius, and she could think of nothing more likely to win his favour than the speedy marriage of his nephew Francesco Maria with her daughter Leonora. This explains Castiglione's remark about the journey of the Dowager Duchess to Mantua. A letter of Isabella's describes the visit of Elisabetta:

"Mantua. December 4. . . . We have here entertained the Duchessa of Urbino with a large . . . company at much expense, but most gladly. . . . She will take back our young Duchessa . . . and we hope now that His Holiness will show us still more favour . . . we hear that S.S. wishes her to go with the Duke to Rome. . . . His Beatitude has sent for the bride a beautiful litter, of cloth of silver with gold cords . . . two handsome pages in livery to match, and a splendid dapple grey horse with fine trappings. . . ."

The bridal party had a wretched journey. They left Mantua in such a thick fog that they lost their way, and wandered about for hours before they found shelter in the Villa of Gonzaga. After a cheerful welcome at Modena and Bologna, they were almost drowned in trying to cross a mountain stream in flood on the way to Faenza. The rush of water had been so sudden that a chariot with two ladies of honour and their baggage actually floated for some distance, the oxen who drew it being swept off their feet by the rushing water. The remainder of the journey was through heavy rain on the worst of roads, but at length the hill town of Urbino was reached and the Duke rode forth to meet the ladies. There was such a successful procession through the streets that nothing would satisfy the young prince but a repetition of the entry next day. This the Duchess Elisabetta "would not

*Alinari, Photo* *Titian*

LEONORA GONZAGA, DUCHESS OF URBINO

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allow, upon which the Duke flew into a rage and said he would go away; but his aunt told him to be reasonable and not to behave like a Turk, with other wise words, so that he said no more and remained content. . . ."

With such a hot-tempered bridegroom, we can only hope that the training of the young Duchessa Leonora had made her very meek, or else that she learnt to manage him. By the special wish of Pope Julius, Francesco took her to Rome, where she was much admired and became a great favourite with her uncle.

The old warrior Pope having now obtained all that he wanted from the Venetians, was quite willing to make peace on his own terms, and after the destruction of their fleet on the Po by the artillery of the Duke of Ferrara, he solemnly pronounced the absolution of the Republic on February 24, 1510, while the ambassadors in their scarlet robes knelt at his feet in the portico of St. Peter's. Venice never regained her ascendancy in the Romagna, and the new route round the Cape of Good Hope having diverted to Lisbon much of her prosperous trade with the East, she ceased before long to rank as a first-rate Power.

Having taken Venice under his protection, Julius now turned round completely and set himself the more serious task of driving the French out of Italy. The young Duke of Urbino, who returned home with his wife in May, was once more placed at the head of the Papal army. Notwithstanding all the efforts on his behalf, Francesco Marchese of Mantua was not released from his Venetian prison until the month of July, 1510, when he went home a broken man, soured in temper and ruined in health. He was not thoroughly trusted

on either side, and the Marchesa Isabella had the grief of parting with Federico, her son of ten years old, who was to go to Rome as a hostage for his father's good faith.

During the last year there had been domestic sorrow in the family of Castiglione. He was very much grieved to hear of the sudden death of the Ferrarese poet, Ercole Strozzi, cruelly murdered as he was returning home one night, less than a fortnight after his marriage with the beautiful Barbara Torella. Jealousy was supposed to be the reason, and in days to come Duke Alfonso was publicly accused of this crime. Ercole was the brother of Tommaso Strozzi, who had married Francesca, the second sister of Castiglione. His eldest sister Madonna Polissena had lost her husband, Jacomo Boschetto, a noble of Mantua, after a long and painful illness. The Count writes thus to his mother:

"I have heard with deep sorrow of the death of M. Jacomo nostro, who indeed deserved the fraternal love which I bore to him; patience; God will make up to him in the next world for his life here of little happiness. I will write a letter to M. Polissena, who must be overwhelmed with sorrow, and I leave her to the care of M. V., whom I pray to tell me particulars of his death. Has any marriage been arranged for Anna? [daughter of the above and niece of Castiglione]. And what will Madonna Polissena do?"

He takes great interest in the welfare of his widowed sister, whom he helps in every way, as we notice in later letters.

The year 1510 was a year of battles. Early in July the Papal troops under Francesco Maria began hostili-

ties in that portion of Romagna which belonged to Ferrara, now in great disgrace with Pope Julius, as Duke Alfonso was a firm ally of the French. Massalombarda, Conselice, and Bagnacavallo were easily taken, but the citadel of Lugo held out gallantly for nearly a month. Castiglione had been ill at Rome, but he was sufficiently recovered to join the army with his usual command before the end of August, when he writes from the camp near Il Finale di Modena. Modena surrendered to the Duke of Urbino and Cardinal Alidosi, who rode in triumph through the city, and on August 20 the papal bull of excommunication against Duke Alfonso and his adherents was published in the Duomo.

Writing from the camp, Castiglione says:

". . . You already know that I arrived here safe and well, and as you will wish to hear in what condition we are, I can assure you that we are all of good cheer, and with good hope of victory over our enemies. If M. V. will pray for us, here, at present, we have no other need. Remember me to all of ours, and give my special greeting to Sister Laura. . . ."

The next letter says:

". . . We remain here in the country because we have no other lodging. But the rains are very heavy and continue all day, but we are all well, by the Grace of God. . . . What we are staying here for we cannot imagine. . . . The Pope will be in Bologna to-morrow (somewhat indisposed from the discomforts he had endured in camp), and soon we shall see how things will go. . . ."

"Modena, 16 October, 1510. . . . We are here in Modena, and hope that we shall soon see the enemies,

and as we are fighting for the Church, we hope that God will be with us. Certain things have been said here with regard to sedition at Mantua . . . to wonder at greatly; when you can safely let me know what thing has happened, I shall be glad. . . ."

January 15, he writes from the camp:

". . . M. Roberto da Bari . . . is ill here in camp, and thinks of going to Mantua; and because I love him as a brother, I have offered him to go to my house, and I think he will accept. I pray M. V. that she will 'fargli carezze' [show him every kindness] and all possible honour, and let him want for nothing. . . . I write this that a chamber may be prepared. . . . We are here somewhat gloomy, as is likely in such a place and in such danger . . . but we hope the best of the enterprise. . . ."

The next important event was the siege of Mirandola, which was looked upon as the key of the position, and was defended by the Countess Francesca, the brave daughter of Trivulzio, and widow of Lodovico Pico. She was well supported by her cousin Alessandro Trivulzio, and they both hurled defiance at the Papal summons to surrender. The indomitable old Pope had come in person to take the city by assault, after a narrow escape of being taken prisoner himself by Bayard. It was a bitter winter and the world was white with snow, but the fiery Julius, in a strange guise of priest and warrior, was everywhere under fire directing the attack, until a breach in the walls compelled the garrison to capitulate. It must have been a gallant sight when the Pontiff crossed the frozen moat and entered Mirandola through the breach, and again when he politely escorted the angry Countess, with all

her belongings, out of her own city, a voluble play of words going on between them all the time.

The conqueror's success went no further. In Castiglione's letters we have a graphic account of the hardships which the army had to endure in camp during that severe weather. He himself has been wounded, but he makes light of it to his mother, although he owns that he is unable to wear his armour.

"We are at Finale (di Modena), at Bondeno and at Massa, while the enemies are at Stellata, at Sermeto and thereabouts. . . . We all think that great things depend upon this Council at Mantua. [Where the Emperor had sent his favourite minister, Matthäus Lang, Bishop of Gurk, to discuss terms of peace with ambassadors from England, France, and Spain. But nothing came of this, for the Pope refused to listen to the Emperor's proposals.]

". . . There is a great famine of everything, and henceforth we shall have to eat the earth. . . . We desire nothing else than a feat of arms to bring us out of this trouble. All my boys, and I too, are very weary of this long vigil. . . . I wish that M. V. could find me at Mantua a little red cloth, and some of tan colour to make them tunics . . . and I should also like some red satin for a 'giuppone'; and a few 'denaretti' (small money)." [The *giuppone*, more commonly called *giubbone*, was a vest or surcoat with sleeves somewhat tight and closely fitting, shorter than the doublet. It was often embroidered with the crest or coat-of-arms, like the surcoat or "jupon" of Edward the Black Prince, which still hangs over his tomb in Canterbury Cathedral, with his shield and helmet.]

A fortnight later he writes that a messenger is going

to Mantua, and he wishes to send his mother word that, by the Grace of God, they are all well:

"It is as much as we can bear, for we are in continual fatigue, and also in great famine, chiefly for the horses, for there is scarcely any food to give them of any kind of corn. Nevertheless I trust that M. V. will find means to send the oats of which I spoke. . . . I hope also that within two days you will send to the tower that red and tan colour cloth of which I wrote, to clothe my boys who are naked and bare. . . . I pray you also to send with the oats two sacks of wheat, for there is none left which is not fetid, and 'bread costs an eye.' . . ."

The need becomes more urgent, and two days later Castiglione sends a special messenger to Mantua to fetch the cloth, which is to be of two kinds. He also requires fine white cloth for three pairs of hose, with the lining, and some white material to make a "giuppone" for Giampietro. There is need for all this at once, as they are in great want. ". . . As for the corn, we are in extreme necessity, for we have eaten down to the ground. Of the matters concerning Casatico, M. V. may be certain that I am always thinking of them; but the difficulty is that I am in sore need of a 'beneficio' [a remunerative post], and that N. S. [the Duke] may find time to give me one. But do not speak of this to any one in the world. . . ."

The truth was that Castiglione had been put to immense expense all this time, and had received no pay whatever. In his next letter, almost a fortnight later, he says that he has received the oats, the eggs, and the sausages, and is most grateful, as indeed they

were in great want. News has reached him that the ambassador of the "Cæsarian Majesty has departed in discord, in a way which promises war rather than peace. May God give us that which is best."

This forecast of disaster was only too soon fulfilled. In May, 1511, the veteran French general, Trivulzio, made a descent upon Bologna—the Pope having barely time to escape to Ravenna—defeated and drove out the Papal troops under the Duke of Urbino and Cardinal Alidosi. The divided command between these two may have had much to answer for during the whole campaign; but when the Cardinal, who was more than suspected of treachery, publicly abused Francesco Maria in the streets of Ravenna, the passionate young prince turned in a rage and stabbed Alidosi with his own hand. Terrible news for the poor old Pope, filling indeed his cup of retribution to the brim! That his favourite should be murdered by his own nephew was the last terrible scandal to complete his discomfiture.

Meantime the Bentivogli were reinstated in Bologna, and the brazen statue of Pope Julius, a masterpiece of Michelangelo, was hurled from its pedestal and made into a cannon by the art-loving Duke of Ferrara.

This fighting in Italy, especially the determined raid of the Pope against Ferrara, had all the bitterness of a civil war, for Duke Alfonso d'Este was closely connected by birth with all the great nobles opposed to him, in many cases most unwillingly.

When Bologna was taken, the portion of the Papal army in which Castiglione served was routed at Casalecchio, about six miles to the west, on the Reno. The French carried away all the artillery and baggage,

and so completely looted the camp that the Count writes from Urbino:

". . . By several ways I took means to let M. V. know that we had reached Cesena in safety. Now by this horseman I send you word that I am at Urbino in health but without clothes, I may say, for I have lost all my horses and everything that I had; yet I will complain of nothing, for, thanks to God, I am safe and sound. If M. V. will take pity on me, I should be very grateful for shirts, 'scuffitotti' of gold, pocket-handkerchiefs and such things, because I am almost destitute. . . . June 1, 1511."

A very trying task now awaited Castiglione in his diplomatic capacity. On reaching Rome, Julius had immediately deprived his nephew of all his dignities, and summoned him to his presence to answer for the assassination of the Cardinal of Pavia. Francesco Maria obeyed at once, taking with him the Count to plead his cause with devotion and tact and the eloquence of his "golden mouth." The Duke of Urbino was put under arrest and was tried by a commission of six cardinals, amongst whom was Giovanni de' Medici, afterwards Leo X. Filippo Beroaldo undertook the defence, and boldly pleaded that Alidosi's notorious treachery had met with its due punishment. Public feeling appears to have been on his side, possibly from the youth of the offender and the provocation which his violent temper had received for the crime. The case was still going on when Julius fell ill of a quartan ague, and for a few days his life was despaired of. Some accounts say that his nephew saved his life by the happy device of selecting the Cardinal de' Medici to carry him the Viaticum,

when the sight of his probable successor made the strong-willed invalid resolve to disappoint him. He took the nourishment which he had previously refused, and recovered, to rise from his sick bed more resolute and undaunted than ever. He at once gave Francesco Maria absolution for his crime, and sent him home with 12,000 scudi, the arrears of pay for his army.

By his wise courtier's advice the Duke insisted that the trial should run its course, until, on December 9, a consistorial Bull was issued, fully absolving him from the charge. Meantime Castiglione is able to write from Urbino to his mother, on September 27, 1511:

"We are returned home safely from Rome, by the grace of God, with the re-benediction and re-establishment in his State of the Illustrious Signor nostro, having passed through endless worries and more labours than can be told; greatly through the very serious illness of N. Sig. [the Pope], of which it may be said that he recovered by a miracle, for the salvation of the Sig. Duca, and of the Church of God; for if death had seized him, it would not have been without peril to the State and person of the Duke, and of we others . . . God be praised. . . . Touching myself, I am going to Our Lady of Loreto that I may fulfil a vow. I do not think of anything more to write to you now, especially as my hand is very weary; . . . it has been extremely weak, but will be much better with a good rest. . . ." He ends with the usual greetings.

## CHAPTER VI

### 1511–1516

POPE JULIUS PROCLAIMS A "HOLY LEAGUE" AGAINST FRANCE—BATTLE OF RAVENNA WON BY THE FRENCH —BALDASSARE CASTIGLIONE FIGHTS UNDER THE DUKE OF URBINO—THE PAPAL ARMY IS VICTORIOUS—THE COUNT IS PROMISED THE CASTLE OF NUVILLARIA—DEATH OF JULIUS II—ELECTION OF LEO X—CASTIGLIONE AMBASSADOR IN ROME—HIS FRIENDSHIP WITH RAPHAEL, ETC.—CULTURED COURT OF THE VATICAN—PLATONISM OF THE RENAISSANCE—DEATH OF GIULIANO DEI MEDICI —LEO X SEIZES URBINO—FLIGHT OF FRANCESCO MARIA.

TEMPEST-TOSSED by fortune, brought to the lowest ebb by almost mortal illness, the unconquerable vitality of Julius II was never more striking than when in October, 1511, he proclaimed a Holy League with Spain and Venice to expel the French from Italy. He made the Spanish Viceroy of Naples, Raimondo di Cardona, Captain-General of the forces, to the great disappointment of the young Duke of Urbino, who sulkily refused to serve under him, although he sent part of his army. Castiglione was with it, as he writes from Sinigaglia on November 6, both to his mother and his brother-in-law, "Il Magnifico Cavalier, e mio onerevolissimo Fratello M. Tommaso Strozzi." These letters are very interesting, as they take us behind the scenes. They are too long to quote in full, but we learn from them that with the growing suspicion of old age, Pope

Julius fancied that his nephew was holding secret communication with the French and with Ferrara, and even believed that Count Castiglione had been sent on a secret mission to Mantua for that purpose. This unfounded accusation had caused injurious reports to be spread against the one courtier whose perfect honesty was unique in those days, and whose honour had always been absolutely stainless. He is greatly distressed, more especially by the fear lest for one moment his mother should have any doubt. He hears that Madonna Aloisia is ill, and at once fears that she is worried and anxious; he cannot even go to Casatico to reassure her, as under present circumstances he knows that it would be unwise, and perhaps awaken fresh suspicion. He mentions to her the secondary causes for his delay; that the roads are unsafe, chiefly from enemies of the Pope, and that he could not obtain permission from the Duke.

"Alla Magnifica e Generosa Donna Maria Aloisia Gonzaga da Castiglione. Urbino. December 22, 1511.

"This evening I have received, through our M. Agostino, a letter from Magnificenza Vostra, together with that of which she wrote to me. It is all extremely precious to me, especially the money, which could not have arrived at a better time. . . ."

He has heard by word of mouth that which he could not have believed possible, and it is supposed that his hints apply to the line taken by the Marchese, who has been always unfriendly to him. Then he adds:

"Patience, this also is fate. May God give His protection; but it is true that I see great misfortune over this City, and especially this poor House. . . . I wish that our Signor knew in any degree what kind of

servitor I had been to him. But of this I will say no more. . . .

"We do not know what will be for our good or for evil. I have been here at Urbino several days with some improvement in my recovery, excepting that I cannot sleep. My taste has come back to me somewhat, but not my strength yet, especially in the legs. . . ."

In his next letter, a month later, he says:

". . . Of our matters I will say no more; God does all things for the best. There has certainly remained ill-will towards me, and I have been under a cloud. Il Sig. Marchese has again said certain things against me, and it grieves me much that any evil tongue has more strength than my true service. If some faithful messenger comes here, I shall rejoice indeed if la Magnificenza Vostra will send me word that she is not troubled about it. Bernardino is the bearer of this; I have given him a commission for a thing which I have desired for many years, that is a suit of armour from Germany, for I find myself badly armed. [It was to cost about 70 florins.] . . . I should also like two caps in the Italian style, those without sides, black, lined, and with two folds, the caps wide and low. . . ." He hopes that matters may be so arranged that they can meet.

These personal matters were blotted out in the great military events which took place shortly afterwards. On Easter Sunday, April 11, 1512, the battle of Ravenna was fought—the fiercest and most desperate conflict on Italian soil since the overthrow of the Goths. It was a brilliant victory for France and Ferrara, but was dearly bought by the death of Gaston de Foix. All the chief leaders on the Papal side were

taken prisoners, including Fabrizio Colonna, the Legate Cardinal Giovanni de' Medici, and the Marchese of Pescara, the husband of Vittoria Colonna. The Spanish Captain-General, Cardona, saved himself by flight. The Duke of Urbino was not present, as only four days before, Castiglione's forebodings had been justified by a Bull from the Pope, who, irritated by his keeping aloof from the war, declared his nephew a rebel and absolved his subjects from their allegiance. On hearing of the lost battle, Francesco Maria at once placed his family in safety at San Leo, and rode in haste to Rome to express his regret and offer his most devoted service. Pope Julius, whose courage never failed before any disaster, now wasted no words, but recalled his Bull, and gave back the *bâton* of command to the young Duke. The valiant Pontiff had his hands full with a General Council on hand, which he opened with splendid equanimity on May 3, only three weeks after his crushing defeat.

He also found time to enlist 18,000 Swiss under the warlike Cardinal Schinner, Archbishop of Sion, and concluded a truce with the Emperor, who suffered the Swiss mercenaries to pass through his dominions. The Duke of Urbino made up for the past by rallying the broken battalions of the League and raising fresh levies, while the French army, threatened on every side, "melted away like mist flying before the wind." Francesco Maria took possession of Bologna without a blow, having previously regained most of the Romagna. There are several interesting letters of Castiglione's from Rimini, where he is in the thick of the fighting and has the most urgent need for his new armour and for camp equipments of all kinds.

"Rimini has been retaken for the Church, and we have the fortress also. . . ."

Parma and Piacenza had followed the example of Bologna, the Swiss took Parma, Genoa asserted her independence, and before the end of June the French had crossed the Alps. The situation was desperate for the Italian allies of Louis XII, and in answer to an appeal from the Duke of Ferrara, the King advised him to make the best terms he could with the Pope. There was no help for it, and the brave Alfonso, who had fought with such splendid gallantry, was compelled to submit to the most humiliating terms before he could even obtain a safe-conduct to plead his cause in person before the Pope. He humbled himself to the dust in vain, for his vindictive foe refused to accept anything less than the surrender of Ferrara itself, which the Duke stoutly refused. Upon this, the "Master of the Game of the World" was so furious in his threats that it was very doubtful if he would play the game fairly, and Fabrizio Colonna—the released prisoner and now the chivalrous friend of Alfonso d'Este—carried him off in the night of July 18 to the safe protection of his own stronghold at Marino. In vain Julius fiercely hunted for the exile, who remained hidden during three months in the various fortresses of the Colonna, or in his own impenetrable swamps. He did not turn up in Ferrara until the month of October.

The city had been well ruled and guarded by Cardinal Ippolyto and the Duchess Lucrezia Borgia, but meanwhile all his dominions had been confiscated save Ferrara and the territory around, which the Duke of Urbino was urgently commanded to take possession

of at once. But the general feeling of all the princes of Europe was in favour of the Duke of Ferrara, and his sister Isabella d'Este, after vain embassies to Rome, sent messengers to Francesco Maria imploring him to make only a pretence of the threatened invasion. That he hated the task we learn from Castiglione's letters written from Rimini, Ravenna, and Modena. There was much malaria in all that district after recent inundations of the Po, and the army was ravaged with fever, so that at length a retreat was made to higher ground. We find an extremely interesting letter written from Lugo, between Ravenna and Castel-Bolognese, on October 17, 1512:

". . . When I was in Bologna I had two letters from Magnificenza Vostra . . . and with regard to what she tells me, I pray that she will not give herself trouble and anxiety . . . for I have hope in our Lord God, that He will guide me and defend me from all perils as He hath done hitherto, by mediation of the prayers of good people. . . . I have been a little doubtful about that which M. V. wrote to me, that I must take care who I suffer to sleep in my room, as I do not know why she says it . . . because I do not see that I have any secret enemy. About the matter of the Secretary . . . I want a man accustomed to hardships, and I should like one who writes well. Under these conditions and knowing what I want, M. V. may send me one when she pleases. . . .

"The bearer of this is a Spanish gentleman, who is a great friend of mine and goes to Mantua for his affairs. I have invited him to the house because he is a very polished and worthy man, and I pray M. V. to receive him well. . . . About other matters I would have her

be of good cheer and put her trust in God Who will help her. And for her satisfaction, I will tell her that il Signor Duca is pleased to make me a present of a Castle in the State of Pesaro which, as I understand, is in a very beautiful and pleasing situation, in a fruitful district and looks out towards the sea, and although not like ours in Lombardy . . . yet it is surrounded with beautiful lands. The Castle is called Ginestreto. . . . M. V. may tell M. Polissena, who may tell M. Camilla, that I have my Castle and only want my 5000 ducats. . . . Nothing is to be said of this until Pesaro is actually in the hands of the Sig. Duca, for a thousand things may happen first. . . ."

In point of fact, the Duke of Urbino took possession of Pesaro the following January, 1513, but Castiglione had another castle instead.

In August, 1512, a great Congress of Ambassadors had been held at Mantua, where it had been decided that the Medici should be restored to Florence, and Massimiliano Sforza, the young son of Lodovico il Moro, should be placed on the throne of Milan. Both these schemes were carried out, but it was not until December 29 that the young Duke was actually established in the rule of his ancestors. Castiglione mentions in a letter of December 12 that he is going to Milan before long, and as this will be an important embassy, he asks his mother to send him forty gold ducats of his money. He also wants two very handsome "scuffiotti" (man's cap), one of which should be of drawn gold as they wear at Mantua. He will be glad to have them made ready at once. The dress of a noble for great occasions appears to have been extremely rich and costly. In his next letter he mentions that he has

*Hanfstaengl, Photo* *Raphael*

POPE LEO X
WITH CARDINALS DEI MEDICI AND ROSSI

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not a "quattrino" in hand. "We have not seen a soldo of pay from the Pope for six months." He also wants his horse sent, and another fur lining (for going to Milan in the dead of winter) as he has only one of marten-skin.

After his return from Milan, Castiglione writes, January 28, 1513, that the Duke has taken possession of Pesaro and that he hopes to go there the second week in Lent.

". . . As we are there I think that I shall obtain possession of my Castle, which is no longer Ginestreto, because I have had it changed for another, which is called Nuvillaria, and the Sig. Duca is content. This is much more convenient, only two miles from Pesaro, very good air, and a most beautiful view by land and sea; it is five miles from Fano, as fruitful as possible, and has a good Palace, which is mine, and is of the same value as Ginestreto, and perhaps more, which pleases me well, and may God give me grace to enjoy it with much content. I shall be able to say that I have a house at Pesaro, so near is it. . . . Urbino, 28 January, 1513."

This castle of Nuvillaria stands on high ground and dates back to the twelfth century, while two hundred years later a massive tower of three stories was added by the Malatesta. The view from the hill is magnificent, overlooking Pesaro and Fano, and the valleys of the Metauro and the Isauro, with the hill country between. To the north our horizon is only bounded by Monte Bartolo, while far away to the south we see the pilgrim town of Loreto, and on a clear day even the distant coast of Dalmatia. The castle is now in ruins, but the name will ever be linked with the

memory of the great Courtier of the Renaissance, whose enjoyment of it was for so brief an hour.

The investiture of the Duke of Urbino to Pesaro, and his full absolution for all past offences, were the last acts of the great warrior Pope who lay dying in the Vatican, while the splendid Carnival procession, to the honour of his mighty deeds, passed in triumph through the streets of Rome. After his boisterous life he made a pious and seemly end, and was lamented as never Pope had been before by the people, who looked upon him as the "deliverer of Italy from the barbarians." His death was a great loss to his nephew Francesco Maria, who used all his influence for the election of the Cardinal de' Medici, and was present with Castiglione at his public coronation as Leo X, on March 19, 1513. It is rather a curious detail to learn that the new Pope had only been in minor orders, and was ordained priest on March 13, and consecrated bishop on March 17.

By a Bull of April 17, Leo showed his sense of obligation by confirming the post of Captain-General of the Church to the Duke of Urbino, who soon after departed from Rome, leaving Castiglione as his ambassador to watch over his interests. On May 28, he has occasion to write:

"Ill^mo et Ex^mo Sig^r e Patron mio. . . .The Pope has not decided, and cannot yet make up his mind whether he shall send the army to Parma and Piacenza, because he will be ruled according to the progress of the French. It does not seem to me that E.V. [Your Excellence] can settle anything; because to go and remain waiting there without any honourable enterprise, I not not believe would be either your wish or to your honour.

According to what happens, I will advise V.E. as seems needful. . . . The Swiss promise great things. . . . The English descend upon the French in great numbers. The Emperor says that he has made provision of troops for the destruction of the French . . . and has sent help to Verona. Madonna Margherita has proclaimed war against France throughout all Flanders. . . . Concerning all these things letters have come to the Pope. God knows what is true; every one speaks and writes as he pleases. . . ." (This is from a hitherto unknown letter, discovered by Martinati in the archives of Florence, and is the only one found to break the long silence until April, 1516.)

We have no concern with the political problems bequeathed by Julius to his successor, who began with universal peace as his watchword in Italy. While the Duke of Urbino, as Prefect of Rome, held the Pope's bridle in his first state procession from St. Peter's to the Lateran, Alfonso of Ferrara rode by his side in gorgeous white and gold brocade, having obtained full absolution for his rebellion against the Holy See. "Once Venus reigned, then Mars, now Pallas holds her sway," was the motto which expressed the general feeling with regard to the accession of Leo X, the cultured head of the Medici. It was during the long residence which followed, at the Papal Court, that Count Baldassare Castiglione came into most intimate communion with all the greatest minds of the day. Amongst these we may mention Raphael, Michelangelo, Bembo, Sadoleto, l'Unico Aretino, Inghirami, Beroaldo, Bibbiena, now the Pope's secretary, Giuliano de' Medici il Magnifico, and many other men of letters and artists, some of whom had been his

friends at the Court of Urbino, and were to figure in the pages of his *Cortegiano*.

It is scarcely possible for us to realise the extent to which Rome had become a centre of culture in that Golden Age, and the marvellous fascination which it held for all who came within its magic circle. As Cardinal Riario wrote to Erasmus, who had felt this as strongly as any one: "Every one who has a name in science throngs hither. Each has a fatherland of his own, but Rome is a common fatherland, a foster-mother, and a comforter to all men of learning." Nowhere was the living work of the Renaissance more visible. A new birth in very truth; no mere copying of antique models, but fresh creative impulse stirred to noble performance by admiration of the past. The mind of the scholar, the poet, and the artist hovered between Paganism and Christianity, and loved the beautiful in both. "On reeds dropped from the hands of dead Pan," each one in his own sphere piped a vagrant fancy or a lofty dream.

In those first years of the young Pope, his Court was the centre of artistic and literary society, to which scholars and learned men gave the tone, while wit and brilliancy and courtliness lent a charm to daily life. "The Vatican was crowded with historians, men of learning, and above all with poets. . . . Amongst them we notice Berni the burlesque poet, Flaminio the elegiac poet, and l'Unico Accolti, who recited his poems by torchlight escorted by a Swiss guard, and hailed by the acclamations of the multitude. Leo himself was the first to applaud, and the duchy of Nepi was the poet's recompense. Here too was Tommaso Inghirami, the learned Librarian of the Vatican,

known as the "Phaedrus of the Humanists"; Paolo Giovio, *l'homme aux ouï-dire*, as Rabelais called him, who came to read fragments of his history, and was saluted by the Pope as the modern Titus-Livius.

"All Rome has become a museum, an academy; everywhere songs, everywhere science, poetry, the fine arts, a sort of voluptuousness of study. Here we find Calcagnini, who has already hinted at the rotation of the earth; there is Ambrogio of Pisa, who talks Chaldean and Arabic; and Valerianus, a master of philology, archæology, and jurisprudence, who occupies his leisure with poems worthy of Horace." A School of Greek was specially founded for the distinguished teacher John Lascaris, and Leo commissioned Beroaldo to publish the newly discovered works of Tacitus. In the circle of highly cultured cardinals, Bibbiena (Bernardo Dovisi of) writes a most successful play in imitation of Plautus, and Bembo the Ciceronian warns the learned Sadoleto not to let his style be spoilt by too much study of St. Paul's Epistles.

This was the world in which, in the year 1513, Castiglione found himself absolutely at home, in a most congenial *milieu*, with kindred souls all around. For the guiding spirit of the age was that modern Platonism which he had learnt of the great Marsilio Ficino (1433–1499) "physician of souls," the translator and exponent of Plato and Plotinus. Pope Leo, his cousin Giulio de' Medici, Cardinal Riario, and many others at that Court of Rome, had all been pupils of Marsilio, and had learnt from him that Platonism was the link which joined Christianity with antiquity. The ideal he set before them was that "man was conceived as like unto God, and was named divine; his destiny

was to seek eternal union with the God from whom he came . . . God the archetype of the universe . . . the ground of all our reasoning, the light of all our seeing." A striking illustration of this lofty thought is shown in the work of the two great artists, Michelangelo and Raphael, both friends of Castiglione, who may be said to have reached their high-water mark of greatness at the time of Leo X's accession.

Can we doubt that the sublime Moses for the tomb of Pope Julius is an allegory of him as lawgiver, priest, and warrior, about to lead the Church from its long wanderings to the sight of that Promised Land where man's faculties will be consecrated to union with God? And surely, as Castiglione gazed on the roof of the Sixtine Chapel, he would understand its symbolism and see how by that array of Sibyls, Patriarchs, and Prophets, the soul of fallen man was taught and trained and led upwards to the feet of Christ the Redeemer.

This spirit of Platonic mysticism is still more clearly seen as guiding the hand of Raphael in the work which he had already accomplished before the death of Julius, in the Stanza della Segnatura of the Vatican. The school of Athens is drawn after Marsilio's model of the Accademia, the classical assembly of philosophers, where Plato in the centre, on the steps of a portico, is pointing to heaven. He thus stands forth as the exponent of that saying in Marsilio's *Academy of Noble Minds* that our life's work is an ascent to the angels and to God. Around him on either side are the serene philosophers Socrates, Aristotle, Pythagoras, Archimedes and others, in deep meditation on themes beyond all mortal ken.

Again, in the Parnassus we have another illustrious company: the great poets of past ages holding high communion with Homer, Virgil, and Dante seer and mystic, guiding them on the upward way. This and the Disputa del Sacramento—much of the finest work of the Renaissance—had been accomplished before the death of Julius; but Castiglione, in his intimate friendship with the artist, may have watched Raphael as he painted the latter half of the Stanza d'Eliodora; the "Flight of Attila," in which Leo I, with the features of Leo X, is pictured on his white mule with his cardinals around, invoking the aid of St. Peter and St. Paul who appear in the clouds. This is supposed to refer to the retreat of the French; while the "Liberation of St. Peter" is said to have allusion to the release of Leo when Cardinal de' Medici after the battle of Ravenna.

The beautiful fresco of Galatea, borne over the waves in her shell, was painted by Raphael in 1514 in the palace of the Farnesina, where we know that Castiglione was constantly a welcome guest of the art-loving Agostino Chigi, and Raphael may have talked over with him the designs for the charming story of Psyche, painted later on the ceiling. In the stately gardens of this palace was a glorious ilex avenue which led to the famous pavilion where Chigi entertained with such sumptuous magnificence Pope Leo and all the famous men of the day. He it was who ordered the Sibyls of S. Maria della Pace from the great artist, to whom he was a generous patron. How often may Raphael and his courtier friend have passed together along that southern bank of the Tiber, by the old Aurelian wall, until they reached the picturesque house with Gothic

windows at the corner of the Via Piscinula, near the bridge of S. Bartolomeo, where dwelt Margaretta, the *Fornarina* beloved by the artist, and with whose portraits we are so familiar.

Another companion of Castiglione in his walks through Rome at this period was Lodovico Ariosto, who hurried to the Eternal City on hearing of the accession of Leo, only to meet with disappointment. Still he owns that if he had taken Orders, his old friendship might possibly have obtained for him a bishopric! He tells how his literary friends took him round the different quarters of the city: here was the Circus, here the Forum, there Suburra (where Virgil lived near the gardens of Mæcenas, and where the last of the Horatii stabbed his lamenting sister). "Here is the Sacred Way, and here Vesta and beyond, Janus had their temples." Those were the wonderful days when constant treasures were excavated, especially in the Golden House of Nero and the Baths of Titus. In his many-sided poem of *Orlando* we find a mirror which reflects the intellectual luxury, the ravishing seductive image of Rome as Ariosto saw it.

Yet in this famous poem of Ariosto we touch upon a point which cannot be ignored in the later Renaissance —the note of decadence in this revelry of culture. The opening years of Leo X's pontificate were full of promise, but to his self-indulgent nature the atmosphere of flattery and adulation was most baneful, and he grew to care more and more for his own ease and pleasure and luxury. This was how he "enjoyed the Papacy which God had given him; he spent 8000 ducats a year on his kitchen, 100,000 in gaming and presents to Court favourites . . . and showed equal

zest for a hunting trip, a fresco of Raphael, an indecent comedy, a discussion between Bembo and Bibbiena, or the elaborate farce of a practical joke."

In this way it was easy to dissipate the immense treasure left by his predecessor, whose great works of building and sculpture he left unfinished; he put a stop to Michelangelo's work on the splendid tomb of Julius, and wasted the great master's time on fetching marble from Carrara and in the making of roads. The promises he made to the learned professors he brought to Rome were not kept, and they were left in poverty; he suffered Leonardo da Vinci to go to France, and even the pay of Raphael, whom he really admired and patronised, was left five years in arrear. Leo had a passion for buffoons, and troubled little about the moral character of those who amused him. Amongst these, a notable instance was Pietro Aretino, a man of evil and licentious life who had "risen from a dunghill" and soon made his mark by the vigour and brilliancy of his language. It was said of him: "Have Aretino for your friend, for he is a bad enemy. God guard every one from his tongue." He is best known as writer of the most scurrilous Pasquinades.

We are told that Leo, whose health was delicate, made deliberate calculations to prolong his life by pleasure. He spent much time at his hunting palace of Magliana, about six miles beyond the Porta Portese, on the Tiber, within easy reach of Rome in his state barge. Here there was excellent hunting and hawking, and he kept all kinds of strange beasts in the grounds—fourteen eagles sent him by Charles V, an elephant and a rhinoceros from Emanuel of Portugal,

porcupines, ostriches, and other foreign animals, besides his horses, mules, dogs, and falcons.

The Pope was magnificent in his hospitality, and was perhaps seen at his best when some great lady from a foreign Court came on a visit to the Eternal City. We have a very full account of the coming of the Marchesa Isabella d'Este in October, 1514, when she was met at Bolsena by Giuliano de' Medici, Cardinal Bibbiena, l'Unico Aretino, and others. Amongst her friends in Rome there was no one with whom she was more intimate than the Count Castiglione, and he appears to have been one of her chosen companions on this her first visit. Isabella received the warmest welcome from all the Papal Court; cardinals and great nobles vied with each other in giving banquets and entertainments in her honour, but that which delighted her most was the performance of Cardinal Bibbiena's comedy, the *Calandria*, at the Vatican, by the Pope's command. This play had been acted for the first time at Urbino, just before the death of Julius in 1513, and Castiglione gave a glowing account of it to his friend Lodovico di Canossa. Then, as now at Rome, the scene painting was a marvel of art; a gorgeous spectacle of a beautiful city with streets, palaces, churches, towers, loggias, temples, and arches.

The play owed its plot to the *Menæchmi* of Plautus, and was a broad farce concerning the adventures of a twin brother and sister, exactly alike, who, in their love intrigues, constantly change their dress and character. Of its good taste the less said the better; but the ladies' chief interest was probably in the music and dancing of the interludes. "First, a moresca of Jason, who came dancing . . . in fine antique armour;

then came two bulls vomiting forth fire. These Jason yoked to the plough, which they drew. He then sowed the dragon's teeth, and there sprang up antique warriors who danced a fierce moresca, trying to slay him . . . but each killed the other. Then Jason again appeared with the golden fleece on his shoulders, dancing admirably. In the second interlude there was a lovely car, wherein sat Venus with a lighted taper in her hand, drawn by two doves . . . with Cupids around, dancing with bows and arrows and blazing torches. . . . The third interlude showed Neptune on a chariot drawn by sea-horses, while eight monsters performed a sword dance. . . . The fourth showed Juno on a fiery car with a crown and sceptre, her chariot drawn by two beautiful peacocks . . . surrounded by eagles, ostriches, sea-birds, and party-coloured parrots. . . . Then came the allegory of Love kindling men and earth, sea and air, with a holy flame to chase away war and discord and unite the world in harmony. . . ."

The Marchesa Isabella was very fond of plays and had seen a great many, at Ferrara, at Milan, and at Mantua, and although she was bored at times after a performance of five hours or so, yet strangely enough she never complains of their immorality, save on one occasion at her old home in Ferrara, when the *Cassaria* of Plautus was performed, and she sat through the whole of it herself, "showing disgust and displeasure," although she would not allow her ladies to be present. Among these, we may remember, was the fascinating Brognina, the lady-love of the Spanish Viceroy Cardona, and the fair Delia, beloved by the young Marchese di Pescara, the fondly idealised husband of Vittoria

Colonna. The much lauded refinement of great princesses was of a curious quality in those days.

After enjoying themselves immensely in Rome, Isabella and her ladies went on to Naples, but by express request of the Pope they returned for the Carnival festivities of 1515. The Marchese of Mantua, querulous and in ill-health, had to yield although he was by no means pleased at his wife's long absence. Giuliano de' Medici was away in France just then, on his way to marry the Princess Filiberta of Savoy, with whom he received the Duchy of Nemours from the French king, and Bibbiena wrote to him: "All Rome says that nothing is wanting here but a Madonna to hold a Court." If the cardinals missed the Marchesa, she certainly found it very dull at home after receiving so much attention and adulation.

During this period of leisure from wars and distant embassies, Castiglione seems to have devoted himself in earnest to his work of the *Cortegiano*, the first rough idea of which he had sketched out "in a few days" after the death of Duke Guidobaldo in 1508. By this time distance had lent a glamour to the past; those delightful literary conversations at the Court of Urbino had found time to crystallise in the writer's mind, and in clear perspective he could trace out the plan of his immortal work. We can make out the date of the latter part of the *Cortegiano* with some accuracy, as in the Fourth Book he mentions the death of Cesare Gonzaga (1512), and the dignity of Doge of Genoa attained by Ottaviano Fregoso (1513–1515), while Giuliano dei Medici is spoken of as still living. The sudden death of this prince on March 17, 1516,

was a fatal blow to the young Duke of Urbino and all his friends.

Before Leo had enjoyed his high position for many months his great ambition had been to form a powerful sovereignty for his brother Giuliano, and for this purpose he proposed to avail himself of the whole might of the Papacy. It was with this object in view that he had arranged the marriage (January, 1515) with the Princess of Savoy, the aunt of Francis, who was soon to succeed to the French crown; he gave the bride a rich dowry, and prepared a splendid palace in Rome for his brother. He had hopes of Naples in the future, but meantime his heart was set on making his brother Duke of Ferrara and also of Urbino. But Giuliano, in gratitude for the happy years of exile which he had spent with Duke Guidobaldo and Francesco Maria, positively refused to be made a prince at the expense of his benefactors, and all the Pope's persuasion had no effect upon him. Even on his deathbed Giuliano earnestly pleaded the cause of Francesco Maria, but Leo only replied: "You attend to getting well: it is no time to speak of these things." It was family aggrandisement which the Medici Pope so ardently desired, and his brother's death only placed his nephew Lorenzo in the foreground. Leo lost no time: he was deaf to the entreaties of the horror-struck Castiglione, and Francesco Maria, Duke of Urbino, was summoned to appear in Rome at the beginning of April, to be tried for the murder of Cardinal Alidosi and his other crimes.

The widowed Duchess Elisabetta and her faithful friend Emilia Pia set forth at once from the stricken Court at Pesaro, where the Rovere family had dwelt

since the birth of the young heir, and hurried to Rome to implore mercy for her beloved nephew, but the Pope would listen to no entreaties. We have an extremely interesting letter written by Castiglione to the Duke on April 15, 1516, explaining all the arguments which he and the Duchess Elisabetta had used, and stating that the Pope was willing to give them a safe-conduct by word of mouth for the Duke, but not a written one. The matter of his coming to Rome is evidently so serious and so dangerous, that Castiglione dare not advise, but ends by saying "that His Excellency must decide according to what seems to him prudent and judicious . . . a quello baso le mani." In the answer of Francesco Maria we see that he is most grateful to his ambassador for all his efforts, but he evidently feels that his life would not be safe in Rome.

Pope Leo was obstinate and inexorable. The unfortunate Duke was excommunicated on April 27, and deprived of all his states, his subjects being absolved from their allegiance. In May the states of Urbino were invaded by the Papal forces from three different quarters, in such overwhelming strength that Francesco Maria, anxious to save his people from a hopeless struggle, yielded all but a few citadels, one of which, San Leo, held out with desperate courage until September. The Duke, with his wife, his infant son, and the Dowager Duchess, escaped by sea from Pesaro in a violent tempest to the mouth of the Po, whose course brought them to Mantua. This disaster was a great blow to the Marchese, who would gladly have welcomed his daughter Leonora and his sister Elisabetta, but for fear of making the Pope his enemy, provided them at first an abode at Pietola. Later in August, when the

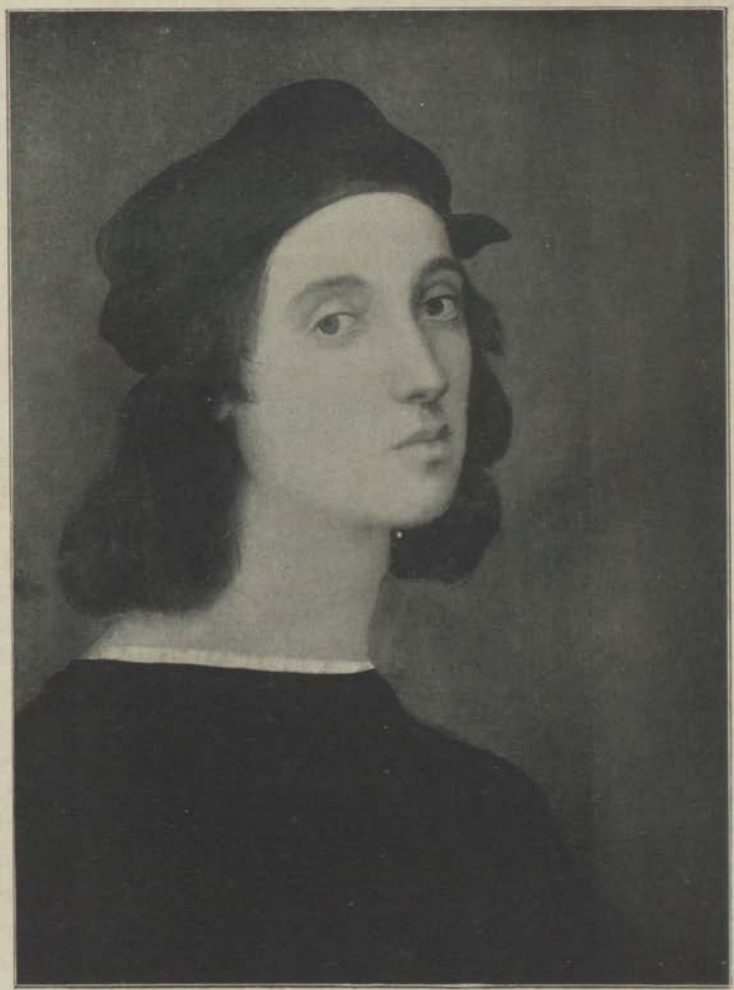
Pope's nephew, Lorenzo dei Medici, was invested with the Duchy of Urbino, the two exiled duchesses were permitted to reside in the Castello of Mantua with a yearly allowance of 6000 ducats from the Marchese Francesco. Of the little boy, Guidobaldo, not much more than two years old, we hear that: "He is the most gentle and pleasant lord in the world. He talks boldly of great things and says, 'If Pope Leo had come by himself, he would never have taken the state of the Lord my father'; and other things at which we marvel." This was in a letter to the young Prince Federico Gonzaga, the son of Isabella d'Este, whom with her usual worldly wisdom she had sent to France to pay his court to Francis I, the victor of Marignano. This the lad of fifteen appears to have done with great success, turning to account the training in manners and diplomacy which he had acquired, when a hostage and a favourite in Rome, with Julius II.

## CHAPTER VII

1516–1521

MARRIAGE OF COUNT BALDASSARE CASTIGLIONE—THE EMPEROR MAXIMILIAN SUCCEEDED BY CHARLES V—DEATH OF FRANCESCO, MARCHESE OF MANTUA—CASTIGLIONE IN ROME—A LATIN ODE—PORTRAIT OF THE COUNT BY RAPHAEL—DEATH OF IPPOLITA CASTIGLIONE, WIFE OF THE COUNT—DEATH OF LEO X—FRANCESCO MARIA, DUKE OF URBINO, AT ONCE RECOVERS HIS ESTATES

IN this year 1516, which was so disastrous for the Rovere family of Urbino, they were joined in their exile at Mantua by Count Baldassare Castiglione, in whose personal history we have to chronicle an extremely interesting event. After the many attempts which his friends had made to arrange an alliance for him, they were at last successful in finding him a bride, suitable in every respect. Ippolita Torelli, a charming and accomplished maiden of fifteen, was the daughter of Count Guido Torelli of Montechiarugolo, a noted *condottiere*, and of Francesca Bentivoglio, the niece of Laura Bentivoglio, who had married Giovanni Gonzaga, the youngest brother of the Duchessa Elisabetta. This great lady was already a connection of her favourite Castiglione, and was highly pleased by his marriage with so close a relation of her own. There were great festivities and entertainments on the happy occasion; the invalid Marchese himself drove



*Hanfstaengl, Photo* *By himself*

RAPHAEL OF URBINO

To face p. 112

out to meet the bride, as did also the young Duchess of Urbino, Laura Bentivoglio, and a great company of nobles and ladies. Apparently as a special compliment, Elisabetta Gonzaga and the Marchesa Isabella welcomed the bride and bridegroom in their own splendid thirteenth-century palace on the Piazza Sordello. For that which was banishment to the poor Duke of Urbino, was to Castiglione but a return to his own home and his own kindred, to the great joy of his mother who had so long been separated from him. As for the young bride, she won golden opinions from all the illustrious company. ("la sposa, la quale in gesti et in costumi satisfece ad ognuno.")

As a delicate attention to Castiglione, a performance of the comedy *Ogo Magoga*, written by Messer Falcone (the friend whose loss had caused him so much grief eleven years before), was given at the Palazzo of Giovanni Gonzaga in the Borgo Pradella, before a most distinguished audience. During the following winter the Count in his peaceful home life had time to put the finishing touches to his *Cortegiano*, although he did not feel that it was ready yet for publishing. In the spring of 1517 he went to Venice for the Feast of the Ascension, with his young wife and his two sisters, the widowed Polissena and Francesca, the wife of Tommaso Strozzi, who was at that time in attendance on the Marchesa Isabella on a visit to the south of France. We do not know whether Castiglione had any diplomatic mission or whether he went to Venice solely for pleasure; in any case, he was received with great honour by the Doge Leonardo Loredano and other distinguished Venetian nobles.

During the greater part of this year Francesco

Maria made a desperate attempt to recover his duchy, but all his gallant fighting only obtained for him in the end certain concessions from Pope Leo, such as the payment of his troops, and permission to take his guns, his banners, and the celebrated library of Urbino back with him to Mantua. The Pope also promised to pay the dowries of the two duchesses, but this was never carried out. The campaign of Urbino, this shameful act of brigandage, is said to have cost him thirty thousand men and a million of scudi. And small indeed was the profit! His nephew Lorenzo, for whom he had so deeply sinned, closed his evil life early in 1518, a year after his ambitious marriage with the French princess, who died in giving birth to Catherine de' Medici, the curse of France in the days to come.

To return to the story of Count Castiglione. On August 4, 1517, he writes from Mantua a most characteristic letter to his lord:—

"Ill^mo et Ex^mo S^r e patron mio. I should wish to have power and friends and strength and more than one life, that I might spend all things in the service of Your Excellency. As God has granted to me a son who was born yesterday . . . I would have you know that you have one servitor more, and amongst other reasons for my rejoicing, the chief one is that there will be more of my blood to spend in the service of V. Excel. . . . and thus it will be with all the others who may be born to me, if such be the will of God. . . . Humbly I kiss your hands, in bona gratia mi raccomando.

"De V. Exel. humil servo

"BALDESAR CASTIGLIONE."

From other sources we learn that there were great rejoicings at the birth of this little Camillo, and the Duchessa Elisabetta came with Emilia Pia and all the noble lords and ladies in Mantua to offer their warm congratulations. Fra Matteo Bandello told one of his amusing stories on this occasion, to amuse the company.

This Bandello, in his *Novelle*, relates how on one occasion he was in the company of Isabella d'Este, in her beautiful gardens at Porto, with their delicious terraces above the Mincio, sylvan arbours, marble fountains, lawns green with perpetual verdure and musical with the voice of waters. There was an animated discussion on the subject of the death of Lucrezia, M. Benedetto praising her highly, while Mario Equicola contended that she was mad to kill herself. Bandello was going to consult the remarks of St. Augustine on the subject, in his *City of God*, when of a sudden "that noble and learned cavalier, Count Baldassare Castiglione, appeared, and the Marchesa, with her most gracious smile, called upon him to settle the dispute. Castiglione would have excused himself, but Isabella insisted; whereupon he told the whole story, and summed up in praise of the most chaste Lucrezia's action . . . which I repeat in the words of the gentle, learned, and eloquent Castiglione." In such pleasant literary society, varied with music and singing, surrounded by friends on every side, and enjoying for the first time a real home of his own, we may well believe that the happy days passed all too quickly.

But the year 1519 brought many changes. As a rumour from afar, we hear of the death of the Emperor

Maximilian, and the succession of his grandson Charles V. Lucrezia Borgia, the wife of Duke Alfonso of Ferrara, died this year, deeply lamented by all who knew her; but that which most concerns this story is the death of the Marchese Francesco of Mantua, at the end of March, 1519. He had of late shown great friendship and honour to Castiglione, and it was possibly on this account that, on the succession of the young Duke Federico, the Count was persuaded to enter his service; as his former lord, Francesco Maria, the exiled Duke of Urbino, still lived in retirement and almost in concealment at Goito.

Lorenzo dei Medici, the usurping Duke, had died at Florence on May 4, and as Castiglione passed through that city on May 20, on his way to Rome, it was with eager hope of pleading for the restoration of the rightful lord of Urbino. But Leo X was inflexible, and lost no time in annexing the whole duchy to the Papal States. On other subjects he was most friendly to the Mantuan ambassador, and sent gracious messages to Federico and his mother, so that they had good hope of obtaining the post of *Generalissimo* of the Church, which the young Marchese greatly desired. The Marchesa had given various commissions to Castiglione, knowing the great friendship between Raphael and himself. He obtained a design (which was never carried out) of a tomb for the late Marchese Francesco, and in his letters he describes the wonderful paintings of the great master in this, the last year of his life. He also tells her all the latest news in Rome, and sends her a wonderful oration of a young Roman, Celso Mellini, who became a great favourite of the Pope, but only enjoyed his brilliant career for a few

months. He was drowned one dark November night as he was crossing the swollen river on his way back to Rome from the Papal villa La Magliana. Leo himself wrote a Latin elegy on the tragic end of his young friend.

We have two letters which the Count wrote to his young wife, from whom he was now separated for the first time: "Alla mia cara ed amata Consorte Maria Ippolita Torella da Castiglione. Reading your letter over again, I find . . . that you would like to go to Modena and remain there several days. . . . I am delighted that you should go where you please, but take care that you have good attendance, and I would make a condition that you do not allow yourself to be so transported with pleasure in your Anna (her baby girl) that you lose all memory of us others, which, to tell the truth, would not be fair. . . . I send you as much loving greeting as possible. Love me.

"In Rome, June 28, MDXIX."

"If you, my dear wife, have been eighteen days without hearing from me, I during the same time have never been four hours without thinking of you. . . . Unlike me . . . you only write to me when you have nothing else to do. It is true that your last letter was a long one, praised be God . . . but would you have me tell the Pope how much I love you? for certainly all Rome knows it, so that many tell me that I am desperate and in evil case because I am not with you; and I do not deny it, . . . for indeed I wish that I could fetch you from Modena and bring you here. Think it over if you will come here, and let me know. Tell me also without joking if there is anything which you would like me to bring you, that

would please you . . . and I will bring it. . . . I cannot yet name the day of my departure, but I hope it will be soon. Praying you to remember me and love me, as I always remember you and love you so much, more than I can say, and greet you with all my heart.

"In Rome, the last day of August, MDXIX."

It was at this time that Castiglione wrote the beautiful Latin ode of more than a hundred lines, in which Ippolita is supposed to lament his absence. It is entitled:—

BALTHASSARIS CASTILIONIS ELEGIA
QUA FINGIT HIPPOLYTEN SUAM
AD SE IPSUM SCRIBENTEM.

The ode is too long to quote in full, but the following selections are very interesting:—

Sola tuos vultus referens, Raphaelis imago
Picta manu curas allevat usque meas.
Huic ego delicias facio, arrideoque, jocorque,
Alloquor &, tanquam reddere verba queat,
Assensu, nutuque mihi sæpe illa videtur
Dicere velle aliquid, & tua verba loqui.
Agnoscit, balboque patrem puer ore salutat,
Hoc solor longos decipioque dies.

. . . . . .

Quid queror? en tua scribenti mihi epistola venit,
Grata quidem, dictis si modo certa fides;
Te nostri desiderio languere, pedemque
Quam primum ad patrios velle referre lares. . . ."

Your picture by the hand of Raphael traced
Recalls to me your features and remains
My only joy, while I your absence mourn.
I smile upon your image, jest and talk,
As if those pictured lips could make reply,
Until it seem that 'tis your very self
Sweet converse holding with me as of old.
The boy looks up and sees his father's face,

Which smiling he salutes with lisping mouth.
Thus in my lonely state I cheat the creeping days.

. . . . . .

But why complain? Lo, while the words I write
Your letter comes, my heart's delight, if truth
Be of a certain found in what I read.
You weary of the lingering days which pass
Afar from me, until you may return
With hurrying steps to your ancestral home.

The portrait of Count Castiglione by Raphael is one of several which the artist painted of his friend. It may have been the picture with regard to which the ambassador of Alfonso Duke of Ferrara writes to his master in 1519, that he finds it very difficult to "get speech of Raphael da Urbino, as he is too much engaged in painting the 'Transfiguration' for Cardinal dei Medici and the portrait of Baldassare Castiglione to see me."

This great work of art was long a treasured possession of the Gonzaga family, and is now in the Louvre.

Castiglione returned to Mantua in November and spent a few months of peaceful happiness with his young wife and his little Camillo and Anna. But at Easter there came bad news from Rome. Pico della Mirandola wrote to the Marchesa that "Raphael of Urbino passed away on the night of Good Friday, leaving us all . . . in the most profound and universal grief. . . . At this Court we can speak of nothing but the death of this great man, who has ended this first life at the age of thirty-seven. His second life, that immortal fame which knows neither time nor death, will endure eternally. . . ." At the time when he was seized with his last illness, Raphael was engaged in painting his wonderful "Transfiguration," and the

unfinished picture was hung above his bier when all Rome came to look upon him for the last time, with grief and lamentation. He was buried with splendid pomp in a chapel of the Pantheon, near the tomb of Maria Bibbiena, whom her uncle the Cardinal had destined for his bride.

It was a curious coincidence that the painter's great friend and patron, Agostino Chigi, died almost at the same time. "Much less loss to the world," as a contemporary remarked. To Castiglione the early death of Raphael was a terrible blow, as they had so much sympathy and affection for each other, and when apart carried on an intimate correspondence. This is a portion of one of Raphael's letters to his friend:

"Sig. Conte. I have made drawings in various manners according to the suggestion of V.S. and have satisfied all, unless all are my flatterers; but my own judgment is not satisfied, because I fear not to satisfy yours. Of those I send V.S. make choice of any, if any are esteemed worthy by you. Nostro Signore [Pope Leo], in his wish to honour me, has placed a great burden upon my shoulders; which is the care of the fabric of St. Peter's. I hope, indeed, not to sink beneath it, and the more so since the model which I have made pleases His Holiness, and he has praised it as having much beautiful talent, but my thoughts rise higher. I should desire to find the beautiful forms of ancient buildings, even if the flight were that of Icarus. . . . I should hold myself a great master if the half of what V.S. writes to me were true, but in your words I recognise the love which you bear me. . . . If this has any excellence of art, I know not, although I labour to have it. Di Roma."

Raphael had painted two portraits of his friend Castiglione, who is also said to be represented by a full-length figure in the Stanza of the Vatican.

Count Castiglione was again sent to Rome in July, 1520, on the important mission of trying to obtain for the young Marchese of Mantua the post of Captain-General of the Church. It was a great trial for him to leave his wife again so soon, as she was in delicate health, but he never suffered his personal wishes to interfere with his public duties. Immediately after his arrival at Rome he writes to his mother:

"Alla Molto Magnifica Madama mia Madre onerevolissima Maria Aloisia Gonzaga da Castiglione. . . . By the Grace of God, I arrived in Rome last Tuesday, the 17th inst., very weary and overcome with the heat. . . . Nostro Signore [the Pope] received me most cordially; we shall see what success we have. . . . Will V.S. be good enough to tell me how she is, and how is my wife, and the children, and how all goes on at home? Above all things, she must keep well and put all worries aside. . . . As for me, it does not seem to me that I am in Rome, because I have no longer here my poveretto Raffaello, whose blessed soul may God have in His keeping. . . ."

But a deeper tragedy was at hand which would touch him even more nearly. On August 20, 1520, not six weeks after her husband had left her, Ippolita wrote him this pathetic little note:—

"Consorte mio caro. I have given birth to a little daughter, which I think you will not be sorry to hear. I have been much worse than I was last time . . . and I have had three bad attacks of fever. At present I feel better, and hope to have no more pain. I will not

write more as I have not much strength. 'Con tutto il core mi raccomando alla, S.V.' Your wife, who is a little weary with pain. In Mantua."

These tremulous words were the last loving farewell of the young wife and mother, who was barely nineteen when she closed her eyes upon life, with all its joys and sorrows. All unconscious of his loss, the Count wrote to his mother on August 27, two days after the blow had fallen. ". . . Yesterday I had your letter . . . telling me of the birth of a little girl. May our Lord God be praised. It is true that I had half expected that it would be a boy; yet still this one will be very dear to me. I should like to know if her eyes are light. I think that my wife must be going on well, for if she had fever, Vostra Signoria would have told me. . . . When I came away I left word with my wife what name I should like if it were a girl, but as I have forgotten it, I will write soon in a letter to her. . . . As this messenger is leaving in haste, I cannot write the name of the child, and the godfather; if there is no peril, V. S. will wait for the baptism that I may send word; and to her I commend myself."

The charming young Countess was greatly lamented at Mantua, and Isabella d'Este felt so much sympathy with the bereaved husband that she sent a special messenger to Cardinal Bibbiena praying him to break the sad news to his friend. She herself wrote most kindly: "I know . . . the grief which you must feel at the loss of so precious a treasure as your dearest wife who, as you hear . . . has passed out of this present world into immortal life. . . . We ask not that you should not sorrow, for we too feel the deepest grief, both for your sake and because of the great love which we bore to your wife. . . ."

No words can describe the sorrow of Castiglione at this irreparable loss of the young wife whom he loved so dearly, and whose memory was ever present with him. The brief romance of his life was over, and the three babies, including the small Ippolita who was named after her lost mother, lived henceforth under the tender care of their grandmother, Madama Aloisia, and their father's letters are full of the keenest interest and love for them. In answer to a kind letter of condolence from the young Marchese Federico, he wrote, on September 1 :—

". . . I never thought to have so great a grief in this world as the death of my wife ; nor did it seem reasonable for me to believe that the poor dear would have to take this journey before me ; but I have had, and have, and always shall have a sorrow beyond words . . . for this bitter death ; but thus it hath pleased Our Lord. May He have compassion on that blessed soul, and not leave me here too long behind her. . . ."

It was a sad year for Castiglione, as in November the death of his old friend Cardinal Bibbiena was another loss for him. But he did not suffer his private grief to interfere with his work, and devoted himself with so much skill to his diplomacy with Leo X, that he obtained for the young Marchese the desire of his heart, and in April, 1521, he was appointed Captain-General of the forces of the Church, under the Pope. There was great triumph at Mantua, and Federico and his mother could not say enough to prove their gratitude to the successful ambassador. He did indeed deserve it, for he had an arduous time with Leo X, although he was a great favourite with him. In a letter to his

mother he remarks: "The Pope certainly bestows much affection on me, but none the less I do not esteem him so much as I did. . . ." When he sends his mother for her "studietto," a picture of Our Lady by the hand of Raphael, another of the head of a peasant, and an antique marble figure, things very dear to him, he prays her to show them to no one. This direction we can quite understand, knowing the Marchesa Isabella's grasping passion for all works of art!

The letters of Castiglione are full of sad allusions to the loss of his dear wife, but he tries to live on with steady fortitude, finding the chief satisfaction that is now possible to him in his work. He hears that the splendid collar presented to him by the King of England has been mislaid, and is very anxious that it should be recovered, as he hoped to leave it to his son, although his "poverina Consorte" had not been able to enjoy it. He sends generous directions about certain attendants of Ippolita's, and ends his letter with kisses to his children and longing desires to see them again. In a letter of June, 1521, he speaks of the intense heat, and is anxious about the health of his dear ones at Mantua; for his own part, he is thankful that he is living in the Belvedere, that villa on the heights commanding an entrancing view of the great plain of the Campagna, with aqueducts and broken pillars standing out in relief against the purple background of the Alban Hills. It had only recently been enlarged by Bramante and connected with the Vatican, and had been the home of young Federico of Mantua, when a hostage of Pope Julius. The Count remarks to his mother: "Would that it pleased God you had a place like this with such refreshing air, such a beau-

tiful view, so many grand antiquities, fountains of sparkling water. . . ." In the beautiful loggia and the splendid court planted with orange groves, Pope Julius had placed his matchless collection of antique statues, such as the Laocoön, the Hercules, and the Belvedere Apollo.

When Castiglione had accomplished his chief mission, the obtaining for Federico the position of Captain-General of the Church, his loyal soul was greatly troubled at remaining in the service of one who was now actually in league with Leo X, the sworn enemy of the House of Della Rovere. In this difficulty he writes to ask the Duchess Elisabetta to obtain from her nephew, the exiled Duke, his permission to remain in the position of ambassador at Rome, promising that "in any time and place he will never fail to do his utmost to serve his late master, in memory of the seal of loving service which he had taken in his youth for the House of His Excellence." This appears to have been freely granted. The next event Castiglione thus describes:

"L'Illmo. Sig. Marchese has offered me 50 lances, which is indeed a great honour, and I know that his Exell. has done so in all affection, for which I am much obliged to him; but I find myself with many debts, and I know that this will be much more costly than useful, as I shall have to spend my own money largely upon it. At present I have passed out of my first youth, and fatigue is more hurtful to me than formerly; and I know what worry it is to govern people. Besides, if Illmo. Sig. Marchese wished to give me some remuneration for my labours . . . I should wish it to be other than 50 lances, because I hold that to be

fatigue and not reward, and if he had wished it in other times, believe that I would not have failed; but for the little time which I have to remain in this world I do not wish any longer to eat *panem doloris*.

"The Marchese has told me with many loving words that he has need of me in Mantua, at the war and in Rome . . . and has begged me to choose the place and work which I prefer. . . . I have elected to stay here in Rome . . . where I can serve him best. . . . I pray Vostra Signoria to be content if I stay away a few months longer . . . and meanwhile my children and the house are better in the hands of V.S. than they would be in mine. You have understood me. . . . I pray you not to speak of it, save to those in our confidence. . . ." He wishes masses to be said for the repose of "la buon' anima della mia poverina" at S. Francesco, at S. Agnese, and S. Giacomo, and alms to be given for her sweet sake. . . .

In the letters there are frequent allusions to his children, and especially to Camillo his son, who was four years old when his father writes that he will send him some small animal (animaletto), and greatly longs to see him again. A month later, in August, he sends word from Rome: "I am very glad that Pantaleone [the tutor] has returned for the love of Camillo, whom I wish to begin attending to his studies, and I would have him commence by learning the Greek alphabet, because children learn one thing quite as easily as another; and you will find some one in Mantua who can see him in the house every day and teach him. . . ." This plan appears to have been carried out successfully, for in October we read: "With regard to the learning Greek of Camillo, I have had a letter from

Michele, who says so many things that he seems to me a flatterer; yet it is enough that the boy shows good intelligence and inclination and good pronunciation. Concerning Latin, I would have him devote himself more now to Greek, because this is the opinion of those who know, that it is better to begin with Greek; because Latin is our own language, and almost as man acquires it, so he uses it with little trouble; but with Greek it is not so."

The only son perhaps takes the first place, but his little daughters are not forgotten. "Concerning our Anna [a baby of three years old], who is a little indisposed with melancholy dreams, Vostra Signoria will give her the remedies which the doctors order; and it being the judgment of Maestro Battista, who from affection and knowledge cannot make a mistake, I am willing that she should take a little wine, but, for the love of God, let it be so much watered that it be 'acqua vinata,' and that only for several months. . . ."

The appointment of the young Marchese of Mantua to be Captain-General of the Church made another sad change in the position of the exiled Duke of Urbino, as the Pope insisted that he should no longer remain in the dominions of Mantua, and even the two Duchesses felt they were unwelcome and went on to Verona. But the darkest hour is ever before the dawn, and better days were in store for the much-harassed family of Della Rovere.

On December 1, 1521, Leo X died so suddenly that there was not time to administer the last sacraments. He was at his palace of La Magliana, in that most desolate spot of the Campagna, on November 24th, when the welcome news reached him of the entrance

of his troops into Milan. Castiglione was with him at the time, and writes that "His Holiness said he was as much delighted as when he was made Pope; and on their way to Rome all the people came out to meet and congratulate him, and the children with olive-branches in their hands. . . ." The Pope was ill with fever, but he forgot everything as good tidings came pouring in: first that Piacenza had fallen to his arms, and on the very day of his death that Parma also had surrendered. If the letters of Castiglione, written to the Marchese of Mantua on the 2nd and 3rd of December (published by Contini) are authentic, there can be no doubt that he believed the Pope died of poison.

"I have written twice to V. Ex$^{tia}$ telling you of the death of N. Signore, which was on last Sunday night, His Holiness having made a most devout confession, although he did not expect death . . . and his last words were repeated at intervals, Jesus, Jesus, Jesus, . . . and his body was examined last evening . . . and the doctors are all agreed that His Holiness was poisoned. . . ." However this may be, Leo X was dead, and the princes who had been so cruelly wronged by him lost no time in asserting themselves. When the tidings reached Francesco Maria, he was at a Benedictine monastery on the Lake of Garda, and he resolved to strike a blow at once for his dominions. Encouraged by the French and Venetian commanders, and joined by the Baglioni who wished to recover Perugia, he hastened to Ferrara and made common cause with Duke Alfonso. Everywhere his former subjects flocked to his standard and opened their gates at his approach; his own city of Urbino

*Hanfstaengl, Photo* *Rubens*

ISABELLA D'ESTE

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threw the Papal lieutenant out of the palace window, and welcomed the new reign with acclamation. Only Pesaro made some delay, but the castellan and his eighty men were soon bought over.

Meanwhile Castiglione was able to do most valuable service to the Duke of Urbino in Rome, for as his state had been formally added to the possessions of the Church on the death of the Pope's nephew Lorenzo, it was necessary to win over the College of Cardinals to his cause, while awaiting the election of the new Pope. This was accomplished with great success by Count Baldassare Castiglione, and a convention was made by which "the Sacred College undertook to maintain Duke Francesco in peaceful possession of his citadels, fortresses, towns, and lands . . . while he was to undertake to serve the Church . . . and to give his little son Guidobaldo as a hostage into the hands of the Marchese of Mantua. . . ." There was an idea of betrothing Guidobaldo to the little Catherine de' Medici, but it was perhaps well for his domestic happiness that this was not carried out.

Thus the exiled Duke recovered possession of his estates, and returned in triumph to his home with his wife and the Dowager Duchess Elisabetta, who had seen so many changes of fortune. Castiglione himself was not so fortunate, as he never regained his beautiful castle of Nuvillaria. He thus tells the story to his mother: ". . . Vostra Signoria knows what happened about my Castello. Those 'poltroni' of Pesaro have always been annoyed that I should have it . . . and when they went to capitulate with the Duke they made it a condition that they should keep it—Nuvillaria. He could not do otherwise at that very difficult moment,

and had to consent, but he wrote me many excuses . . . and has made me many promises. . . ." Castiglione evidently felt this very much, and expresses most dignified regrets, though in truth he had deserved great rewards, instead of losing that which was already his. Throughout the whole of his life this distinguished courtier and ambassador had good cause to lay to heart the warning: "Put not your trust in princes."

## CHAPTER VIII

### 1521–1523

ELECTION OF POPE ADRIAN VI—BALDASSARE CASTIGLIONE IN ROME, AS AMBASSADOR FROM FEDERICO MARCHESE OF MANTUA—ADRIAN'S LONG DELAY—CASTIGLIONE'S LETTERS—INTRIGUES IN ITALY—FRANCESCO SFORZA BECOMES DUKE OF MILAN—RETREAT OF THE FRENCH—DESTRUCTION OF GENOA—THE PLAGUE IN ROME—FEDERICO, CAPTAIN-GENERAL OF THE CHURCH—CASTIGLIONE RETURNS TO MANTUA—HIS ART COLLECTIONS—HE ATTENDS ISABELLA D'ESTE TO PADUA AND VENICE—DEATH OF POPE ADRIAN VI.

THE death of Leo X at the age of forty-five, strangely young for a Pope, was so unlooked for, that there was no well-concerted intrigue amongst the most influential cardinals for the election of his successor. The Papal Court was never so magnificent as during his time, but his death spread ruin amongst his friends, from whom he had borrowed to an incredible amount, while everything of value in the Papal treasury, even the tiaras and mitres, were pawned. Castiglione says that no one would believe the straits to which the Cardinals responsible for the government were reduced. With his splendid talents and opportunities, Leo had deliberately chosen the lower way of selfish pleasure and luxury, so that "never died Pope in worse repute." Amongst the sneers of Pasquino we find: "Leo X came to power like a fox, reigned like a lion, and died

like a dog." If such was the impression which he left, we cannot wonder that the Cardinals would not vote for another of the Medici, although no one else had so much influence as Cardinal Giulio, and the Conclave, which began to sit on December 27, soon came to a deadlock. Then some one appears to have suggested the name of an unknown foreign cardinal, and as we know, by some strange irony of fate, Adrian, Bishop of Tortosa, was elected to the Chair of St. Peter, to his own amazement and dismay,[1] on January 9, 1522. Castiglione mentions a curious incident which occurred in this Conclave. The Cardinals came to the door which shut them in, and knocked, desiring that it should be opened, as the Cardinal of S. Marco was in peril of death. The ambassadors were summoned—only the Portuguese noble and Count Castiglione seem to have been within reach—and they were bidden to write to their princes and explain the matter. Then the poor old Cardinal Grimani was carried out on a chair, and the door was locked again.

The enforced seclusion of the Conclave was a very serious ordeal for the Cardinals, especially when it was much prolonged. Sir Thomas Hoby (the first translator of the *Cortegiano*) happened to be in Rome not thirty years later at the election of Julius III, and he thus describes the process:

"All such cardinalles as were in Rome, after solemn masse of the holie ghost sung among them, entred into the conclave according to accustomed manner, viz. . . . every cardinalle had a little cabbin prepared for him, hanged and separated from the rest by his owne hangings, without anie light at all, excepet so

[1] See *Marguerite of Austria*, Christopher Hare, p. 272.

muche as he lettethe in by the pinninge uppe of the hanging of this cabbin, within the whiche he hath so much place for a litle court bedd for himself, a pallet for two of his servants, whom he lysted to have within with him, one litle square table and a coffer for his stuff . . . all walled up. . . . Thro a dresser, his own provision from his owne palace putt and delivered unto the two servants . . . the assaye or tasting thereof being first taken. . . . They remained there unless they fell ill, as often happened, when they were permitted to go to their owne palaces, where one or two of them diede."

When the Cardinals came forth on that January day, 1522, and announced the election of Adrian of Utrecht, the Emperor's Viceroy in Spain, there was an outcry of indignation in the city. A letter of the Duke of Ferrara shows how absolutely unknown the new Pope was in Italy. "We have tried to find out who this Cardinal Artumensis can be, and we learn that he is a Fleming, a man of about sixty-five . . . formerly tutor of the Emperor."

A very trying time followed for Castiglione, as the new Pope delayed his coming month after month, while all was in confusion, no money was to be had for any purpose as the coffers of the Church were empty, and he writes: ". . . One hour seems to me a thousand years, for I cannot tell you the worry which I have had with these Cardinals!" However, he succeeded in obtaining from Adrian the confirmation of Federico as Captain-General of the Church, and also his assent to the surrender of Urbino to Francesco Maria, who was already in possession. These were the supreme results of Castiglione's labours, yet it is scarcely possible to

over-estimate the delicate diplomacy, the constant watchfulness, and even the magnetic influence of his personality, by which this and much more was achieved. His keen insight, untiring patience, and perfect courtliness made him an ideal ambassador, while at the same time he was so scrupulously honest and trustworthy, that even his political foes respected and loved him.

During the long months from January to August, 1522, when Rome was left in anxious expectation of her reluctant Pope, the whole situation stands clearly revealed to us in the very full and constant correspondence of the Mantuan ambassador to his lord, the Marchese Federico, and also to his old friend and patron the Duke of Urbino. Fortunately for Castiglione, he could be faithful to them both, as they were near kinsmen and their aims and interests coincided. In the mass of letters which have been preserved, he shows his constant devotion and indefatigable energy in the cause of the young prince of twenty-one, to whom, with far-seeing wisdom, he gives the most judicious advice. The son of Isabella d'Este had been watched over from his infancy and forced in his studies like a greenhouse plant, much to the annoyance of the rough soldier his father, of whose courage and spirit the lad inherited a good share. Sent as a hostage to Rome and made the spoilt favourite of Pope Julius, Federico's manners improved at the expense of his morals, in the corrupt atmosphere of the Papal Court. His notorious devotion to Isabella Boschetti was a great trial to his mother, who had some years before tried to arrange a suitable marriage for him, with the result that at this time he was betrothed to Maria Paleologa, daughter of the Marquis of Montferrato.

It is no easy matter to follow the tangled thread of the intrigues on which the Count kept keen watch all over Italy, and reported almost from day to day. We see the Baglioni restored to Perugia and Rimini surprised by the Malatesti; while in February the Garfagnana revolts, and appeals to the Duke of Ferrara to send a governor in place of the Papal Commissary. Alfonso selects for the post Lodovico Ariosto, who first makes his will, then publishes the second edition of the *Orlando Furioso*, and reluctantly sets out through the Modenese Alps to take up his rule in Castelnovo. Ascanio Colonna takes possession of Camerino, and later the rightful heir, "poor dear but ill-starred Sigismondo," is murdered near La Storta, probably by the interloper.

Castiglione was fortunate in making peace between the Cardinal de' Medici and the Duke of Urbino, who actually obtained the post, for one year, of Captain-General of the Florentine forces. A little later, by following the advice of his faithful friend, he sent an envoy to Spain with such good result that he was again made Prefect of Rome by the Pope. The interest of all the Gonzaga family was at this time greatly excited by the hope of placing Francesco Sforza, son of Il Moro and Beatrice d'Este, on the throne of Milan. Encouraged by the Imperial party, the young prince reached Italy early in April, and after a warm welcome at Mantua was conducted by Prospero Colonna, the head of the League, into Milan, where he was received "with such ringing of bells and firing of guns as might have brought the world down in ruins."

Only a few weeks before, Castiglione had written from Rome: "I am now joyful with the hope that the

Sig. Marchese Illustriss. will soon accompany the Sig. Duca of Milan to his home. . . . God grant that we may before long have news that the French are beaten." The French general, Lautrec, the brother of Gaston de Foix, had recently been strengthened by the coming of 16,000 Swiss whom he joined at Monza. But after some weeks the men became impatient, and clamoured for battle or pay, until Lautrec, against his better judgment, found himself compelled to attack the enemy in a strong position near the villa of Bicocca, about three miles from Milan. His army met with a crushing defeat. The surviving Swiss retreated sulkily across the passes of the Alps, and the French were driven to retire from Lombardy, with nothing left to them save the citadels of Novara, Cremona, and Milan. The young Marchese of Mantua appears to have greatly distinguished himself both in the defence of Pavia and the later fighting. Castiglione sends his warmest congratulations to Isabella d'Este on the fame which her son has acquired, and rejoices with pride in his triumph. But when Genoa, which was on the French side, was stormed and pillaged at the end of May by the army of the League under Prospero Colonna, the Duke of Milan, and the Marchese of Pescara, the chivalrous Count is horrified at this barbarity, and exclaims that it is ". . . a cruel calamity only to think of it! . . . All Rome is in grief and horror, and it seems almost incredible that this poor city should have deserved such a scourge." Sismondi says that "the ruin of Genoa shook the fortune of every merchant in Europe."

Castiglione was the more deeply interested on this occasion as his old friend of those halcyon days in

Urbino, one of the characters in the *Cortegiano*, was Ottaviano Fregoso, at that time Doge of Genoa. A man of the noblest character, a just and wise ruler, beloved by his people; at the critical moment he was ill with gout in his palace, and when the city was taken by surprise he surrendered to the Marchese of Pescara, who treated him with great harshness and severity. In vain did the loyal Castiglione use all his influence to have his friend removed to a more gentle captivity in Mantua, and the Duchess Elisabetta of Urbino warmly seconded him, but Pescara was obstinate in his refusal, and the unfortunate Fregoso did not long survive his ill-treatment.

As we read in the *Cortegiano:* "Il Signor Ottaviano Fregoso is also dead, a man most rare in our times; magnanimous, religious, full of goodness, of talent, of prudence, of courtesy, and truly a friend of all honour and virtue, and worthy of such high renown that even his enemies were ever constrained to praise him; and those misfortunes which he endured with such constancy were enough to bear witness that fortune, as she has ever been, so is still at this day, opposed to all virtue."

We turn away with a feeling of relief from all such intrigues and cruel wars, to those more private and intimate letters of Castiglione which throw so much light upon his life in Rome during that eventful year.

Isabella d'Este, "Madama Illustrissima," is a constant correspondent. She writes to ask for news, and to obtain his help in a variety of ways. Thus her younger son Ercole is destined for the Church, and she is very anxious about the choice of a tutor, which she leaves to the discretion of her brilliant and learned

friend. In his delightful letters he gives humorous accounts of the meetings in Conclave when the Cardinals are all at cross purposes, some being on the French side, while the majority are Imperialists. But the main subject of his letters is this unknown foreign Pope and his prolonged delay in coming to take possession, although there are constant rumours that he has actually started. After telling her the numerous ambassadors who have been sent to hasten the departure of Adrian, he adds that the Cardinals have decided to send no more Legates out of Italy, as that plan may succeed. "Also we have letters from various Italians who inform us of the goodness and piety of His Holiness, who desires universal peace and the reformation of the Church. He has decided that he will give no benefices save to men worthy of them; they say that he celebrates Mass most devoutly every morning, and does many other good works. . . . (He wishes to provide benefices with good men, and not men with good benefices)."

The Marchesa has evidently appealed to Castiglione about obtaining her son's pay as Captain-General of the Church, but she is told that it is impossible to raise money in Rome, though he will see that certain provisions shall be sent to the army. He regrets that his letters are not so entertaining as in former days, but never has there been such a dull Carnival and Easter. Amidst his many engagements the devoted courtier finds time to obtain for "Madama Illustrissima" various works of art; a relief by Caradossa, "who is so old that this is the last work he will ever do"; and he obtains for her a marvellous organ of alabaster which he has bought for 600 ducats, and will send to Mantua

as soon as he can obtain enough mules to carry it. There is some trouble with the Roman "douane," who wish to charge 200 ducats, but in any case the great and splendid organ reached Isabella in safety, and was placed in her studio.

While the Count is thus engaged, we cannot wonder that he is in sore need of money himself and deeply in debt, for of his promised salary of 1200 ducats he has not touched a "denaro," and is obliged to ask his mother to raise a mortgage on his estate of Casatico and to sell some of his valuable horses. In his important position as ambassador, constantly present at every great function, there are many expenses both with his household and his dress, which was so costly at that period of the Renaissance. We hear of surcoats and doublets of velvet and satin, hose of the finest white cloth, of mantles lined with marten or with sable, and of caps enamelled with gold; splendid jewels and massive gold chains were also worn. It is noticeable that at his present age of forty-four Castiglione shows a strong preference for black usually touched up with gold, and mentions incidentally that the equipment of his horse Turcone is of black velvet. When he has a journey before him, he is most particular about the mules and horses he will require, and adds: "Some gentlemen here have 'mantello a acqua all Spagnuola' [a Spanish raincoat], and I would like one made of good cloth, of a dark mixture or dark tan colour. The mantle must go all round and not be too long, only sufficient to cover the surcoat, with a cape and a little collar cut so as to fit closely to the neck." To order such a comfortable riding garment as this is undoubtedly a sign of increasing years.

In the Mantuan ambassador's letters to his mother, he makes frequent mention of his household, which as a rule is quiet and honourable, and he has several discreet youths, pleasant and of good intelligence, who are being trained to his service. He takes great interest in his young nephew Uberto Strozzi, for whom he has obtained a position as gentleman of the Cardinal Pompeo Colonna, who was to have been sent as Legate to Spain, but when this order is countermanded, he writes: "So Uberto nostro will be in no peril of the sea."

But Castiglione has other more serious anxieties, for early in the summer of 1522 we begin to hear about the terrible plague which desolated Rome in that fatal year. We cannot wonder that this scourge should have become almost endemic in certain quarters of the ancient city, when modern discoveries have brought to light the unspeakable pollution of the precincts where the churches are crowded round the old Forum and the cemetery of S. Maria Antiqua. The Count writes to his mother on August 5, 1522:

". . . As I know you will be anxious about me, I write to tell you that I am well, Dio grazia, and my household. . . . With regard to the plague, we take every care and precaution and medicines and continue in prayer to God. I am here in the Belvedere, which is a good situation as Vostra Signoria knows, remote, and I do not go about much or my people . . . and I have not wished to leave Rome because many of those who have gone are fallen ill with fever, for it is dangerous to leave at this time of year. . . . I pray V.S. not to be anxious, because I take care of myself and trust in our Sig. Dio."

A week later he writes:

". . . The plague has caused great destruction . . . but it has been mostly amongst the poor. Cruel suffering has been caused because all those who are ill of any other sickness are suffered to die of hunger and necessity because every one denies it, and those who have the plague will not say anything from fear, so that it is a very evil thing, for there is no great want of provisions. I believe that forty thousand persons have left Rome. Every day certain companies go in procession to the principal churches, and often carry the head of S. Sebastian and an image of S. Roch, and stop before the infected houses and say certain prayers, and cry to God for mercy. But that which would make Anna [his baby girl] cry very much, is that a great number of little children, all naked from the waist upwards, go in procession scourging themselves and crying for mercy, and saying, *Parce Domine populo tuo;* and with them are certain persons who make them go in order. . . . Men are touched by the prayers of these innocents; may our Lord God also be touched and check the sword of justice, which certainly will strike otherwise . . . There are said to be many miracles in Rome: amongst others, a woman went in procession with a child in her arms who had the plague, and the other women knew it; but she went on with great faith, and arriving at S. Agostino placed the child upon the altar of Our Lady and it was healed at once. Many other miracles are spoken of. I remain here at the Belvedere, a place very remote and safe, and do not go about much, therefore V. S. may remain with a quiet mind, and to her I always commend myself and to all of ours."

This was the condition of Rome when the long-expected Pope Adrian at length made his state entry into the city on August 30, 1522, with the baldacchino borne over his head by Federico Marchese of Mantua, as Captain-General of the Church. It was a proud moment for Castiglione, as a seal of his achievements, and he was at once received in high favour by the new Pope. The Duke of Urbino also offered his homage, and was received with much honour and formal recognition of his restored dignities. Alfonso of Ferrara sent his young son of fourteen, Signor Ercole, soon afterwards, to plead for the restitution of Modena and Reggio. But this he did not obtain, although the Pope and the cardinals congratulated the handsome son of Lucrezia Borgia on his eloquent Latin speech.

Pope Adrian himself had met with a cold reception, for the Curia and the people had no use for a "Dutch saint"; a gentle, pious, simple-minded old man who brought his aged housekeeper from the Netherlands and a few servants, to the stately Vatican, spending about a ducat a day on their food. He tried to set up a new standard of living, but only met with ridicule and contempt, for the luxurious cardinals had no intention of changing their pleasant, easy way. A learned and somewhat pedantic scholar, he had no interest in the glowing art of the Renaissance or the treasures of classical antiquity, and turned away from such statues as the Laocoön with the exclamation that they were heathen idols. The new Pope had no sense of humour, and was so indignant at the jests and epigrams pasted on "Pasquino" that he threatened to throw the statue into the Tiber. The clever, licentious satirist, Pietro Aretino, who had earned the dangerous title of

Secretary of Pasquino, found it wise to make his escape to Florence, where he took refuge with the Cardinal de' Medici, who later sent him for safety to the camp of his cousin, Giovanni delle Bande Nero. The gallant captain and the dreaded scandal-monger struck up an intimate friendship, which lasted until Giovanni's tragic death at Mantua in 1526.

It was with much satisfaction that Castiglione, having successfully accomplished his mission, was free to return to Mantua before the end of the year. Yet it was a sad home-coming after eighteen months of absence, and must have called up many tender memories of the fair young wife from whom he had parted with so loving a farewell, never to meet her again. His elder children, Camillo, aged five, and Anna, not yet four, would scarcely remember him, while the baby Ippolita he had never seen before. But in a world of change, one loving trustful soul remained ever the same; his mother was still, as in the days of his happy boyhood, his best and dearest friend. As we see from their constant and intimate correspondence, the two were so closely knit together that they could always turn to each other in perfect assurance of faithful love and sympathy, while the motherless children were now another bond between them.

Count Castiglione was now once more, after his long exile at the Court of Rome, in the midst of his kindred and friends. Although the death of his young brother Jeronimo had left a vacant place in the family circle, he had his three sisters close at hand; the widowed Polissena with her children, Francesca the wife of the learned Tommaso Strozzi, whose son Uberto had commenced his courtly and successful career at Rome,

and, dearest of all, his youngest sister, "Suor Laura," leading her saintly life in the neighbouring convent of Santa Paola. Under all these home influences we can picture the Mantuan noble settling down to a life of comparative leisure and peace. He had taken up his literary work again, for we know that he sent for the papers of his *Cortegiano* to Rome, and had been engaged in revising them in the charmed seclusion of the Belvedere. He found constant interest in his country villa of Casatico, where in the hot weather his children could play in the beautiful shady gardens, as he had done of old, and where he could give personal care to his splendid stud of horses.

In his letters of this period we also learn that the Count is adding rooms to his stately palace in Mantua which he is "extremely anxious to adorn," and is engaged in filling with the treasures of art which he collected in Rome. He writes to various friends about "an exceedingly beautiful cameo for which he has a strong desire . . .", for a bust which Giulio Romano has discovered belonging to a head in his possession. . . . Later he has received the cameo of the head of Socrates, which is very precious to him . . . but he regrets the delay in obtaining that "benedetta tavoletta" of Raphael, and wishes that his marble statues would arrive . . . but he cannot buy any more antiques at present unless they are very good and of a reasonable price. "The Sig. Marchese is anxiously expecting his medal engraved by the hand of Caradossa. . . ." He inquires about some Spanish couplets (Copla) in praise of Our Lady, which have the Spanish and Latin together. This leaves us in doubt as to whether he knew Spanish at this time.

*Hanfstaengl, Photo* *Titian*

FRANCESCA MARIA I, DUKE OF URBINO

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But with all these personal and artistic interests, Castiglione is indefatigable in the service of his lord. He is constantly writing urgent letters to ambassadors, chancellors, cardinals, and other important persons in Rome, that they may use their influence with Pope Adrian to obtain payment for the Papal forces. He points out that it is impossible for soldiers to live without eating . . . no money has been received for so long that the army is absolutely destitute . . . the Sig. Marchese has been very badly treated, and will be compelled to disband his companies, and this would be a very great pity. . . . Castiglione is also insatiable for news, and desires to receive the earliest intelligence from the seat of war and the minutest particulars of every intrigue which concerns his state. Castiglione's diplomatic efforts were at last rewarded, and the Marchese Federico and his mother, Madama Isabella, could not do enough to show their gratitude to the devoted ambassador who had served them so well and with such complete success. There were always interesting visitors at Mantua, and this January, 1523, there came a certain Antonio Pigafetti, who had sailed round the world with Magellan, and had brought many marvellous tales. He told of new islands discovered in the Great Ocean, of the Golden Chersonese, of the Persian and Arabian seas, of passing the Cape of Good Hope into the Sea of Ethiopia, and onward to the Canary Isles, reaching at length their own land by the opposite way; "throwing into the shade the deeds of the Argonauts."

The same month Titian came to Mantua on his way to Ferrara, but only remained a few days, during which he appears to have commenced the portrait of

Isabella Boschetti, which the young Marchese was so eager to have painted, and which was finished the next year in Venice.

In the spring of 1523 Castiglione accompanied the Marchesa Isabella first to Padua, to fulfil a vow to Il Santo, and then to Venice, where she found great changes since her last visit with the Duchess Elisabetta, twenty-one years before. The frescoes of the Council Hall were new, and the grandest altar-pieces of Giovanni Bellini, the work of Carpaccio in the church of San Giorgio dei Schiavoni, and the gorgeous paintings of Titian and his pupils. The Marchesa was lodged in the Palazzo Barbero, next to the Cornaro Palace, and not far from the church of S. Vitale, on the Grand Canal. She was unwearied in visiting everything, with Castiglione and his friend Navagero, the librarian of S. Marco, as her guides. Count Baldassare had the curious good fortune of always being present when any especially interesting event took place. Thus he had been scarcely a week in Venice before Andrea Gritti was proclaimed Doge, and he was present with the Marchesa and her brother the Duke of Ferrara at the magnificent ceremonial of the new Doge's enthronement. He was in S. Marco at the High Mass when the stately banner of the Republic was given into the hands of the Doge, and he saw him crowned with ancient pomp at the top of the Giants' Stairs. In his official capacity there was now an opportunity for the Count to interview His Serene Highness and obtain assurances of his good feeling towards the Marchese of Mantua; while he also persuaded him to engage the services of the Duke of Urbino as General of the Venetian forces (his

appointment for a year with Florence having now come to an end).

It was difficult for the pleasure-loving Isabella to tear herself away from the delights of Venice, "that terrestrial paradise," as Aretino called it. The Venetian nobles spent the wealth of their hardworking ancestors in princely style. They gave splendid banquets in halls crowded with priceless works of art, and decorated with roses. The tables were laden with gold and silver plate, and the most costly wines were poured out like water, while endless courses of the most delicate food were pressed upon the guests.

The constant life and movement on the Grand Canal, that "patriarch of all streets," with its ever-moving panorama of softly gliding gondolas, beautiful women "shining with silk, gold, and gems," leaning down from the balconies of the magnificent palaces on either side; everywhere music and light and colour, such as no other city could boast of, to charm its passing guests. All this was so delightful to the Marchesa that she returned to Venice again the next spring. But no such pleasing prospect awaited Castiglione, who on his return to Mantua soon found it his duty to attend his lord to the seat of war, as in his capacity of Captain-General for the Pope and Florence, Federico had to oppose a new French invasion. Various letters from the camp at Fianello and Pavia throw much light on the hardships of this campaign.

It was on September 14, 1523, the very day when the French army under Admiral Bonnivet crossed the Ticino, that the ill-fated Pope Adrian died, after seeing the ruin of all his hopes for peace, and the absolute failure of all his well-meant efforts for the reformation

of the Church. After his release from "this chair of misery," as he called the Papal throne, there was a long Conclave of fifty days before the worn-out cardinals at last agreed to the election of Giulio de' Medici, on November 19. The new Pope had been for years an intimate friend of Count Castiglione, who was at once sent from Mantua to congratulate him on his accession, and to remain in Rome to watch over the interests of the Marchese. On December 10, he and Cardinal Sigismondo Gonzaga, the uncle of Federico, had an audience with Clement VII, who received them most kindly and pleasantly, but declined to talk about business. When he heard that the young Marchese of Mantua was not very well, the Pope replied that "he must take care of himself, and that he had done enough, and must now let the Viceroy [Lannoy] do a little."

This was an amiable, diplomatic remark, which did not in any way commit His Holiness, who was still vague as to his future policy.

## CHAPTER IX

1523-1525

CARDINAL DEI MEDICI BECOMES POPE CLEMENT VII—COUNT CASTIGLIONE SENT TO ROME—RECEIVED WITH GREAT HONOUR BY THE NEW POPE—CASTIGLIONE APPOINTED NUNCIO AND COLLECTOR AT THE COURT OF SPAIN—BATTLE OF PAVIA—FRANCIS I TAKEN PRISONER TO SPAIN—MANY INTRIGUES—LETTERS OF CASTIGLIONE—HE IS IN GREAT ESTEEM AND FRIENDSHIP WITH CHARLES V—CONCERNING CHARLES DE BOURBON, DUC DE MONTPENSIER—DEATH OF ELISABETTA GONZAGA, DUCHESS DOWAGER OF URBINO.

THE pontificate of Clement VII had opened with every promise of good fortune and success. The Roman people rejoiced in the hope of a return to the golden age, and in this the artists, the men of learning, and the pleasure-loving cardinals were of one mind. But the tumult of applause which greeted his coronation had scarcely died away before a cloud appeared upon the horizon, for when the new Pope had to decide upon his political action, he showed himself a true Medici and began to temporise at once. Between the two great foreign Powers which struggled for supremacy in Italy, the Emperor Charles V and Francis I of France, Clement would not honestly come to a decision, or loyally support either prince. He wished to await the course of events, and make sure of being on the winning side, or—which would have suited him best—to hold an even balance in Italy between the two, so

that he himself might always remain the supreme arbiter.

In the troubled state of Italy it was imperative that Castiglione should prolong his stay at the Papal Court to watch over the interests of his lord, to whom he continues to write constantly, telling all the news of Rome, and entering into the minutest details of all the interviews he has with the Pope, who treats him with the most intimate friendship. Yet never before had he felt it to be so grievous a trial to be kept far from his home and the children, whose education and training had become to him an absorbing interest. Rome, too, was no longer the same to him as it had been in those bygone happy days when he was surrounded by his friends—Raphael, Giuliano de' Medici, Bibbiena, and others; now he felt lonely and haunted with sad memories. We hear much of the plague, which still lingered on; the weather was unpropitious, and there was great scarcity of food that year.

In a letter to his mother in May he tells her of the trouble which he has had in his household. His cook took the muleteer and Gio. Bello (another servant) into the city to feast at a tavern one night, and both the guests took the plague, but they did not go back to the house. Gio. Bello went to the house of a poor woman and died there, while the muleteer was taken to the hospital and his fate was still uncertain. The cook himself appears to have escaped the infection, but could not be suffered to return to the Belvedere. The Count adds words of comfort to his mother as to the precautions he takes against this terrible pestilence, to set her mind at rest.

It is in a letter to the Marchese Federico of July 20,

1524, that we have the first hint of that coming event which was to cause so tremendous and tragic a change in his future life. Castiglione writes:

"I had remained two days in the house with a slight indisposition, when yesterday N. Signore sent for me, and with many good and honourable words made me a discourse about the love which he had always borne to me for my merits, and the trust which he had in me . . . and he would make a proof of this confidence . . . that it being necessary that he should send a man of quality to be with the Emperor, where he would have to deal with all things that belonged not only to the Apostolic See, but to Italy and all Christianity; therefore having considered all those who might serve him in such a position, he had not been able to find any one from whom he could hope for better service than myself; and therefore he desired that I should be willing to accept this enterprise, which was the most important he had in hand. I thanked him, and kissed the feet of His Holiness for the trust which he had shown me . . . and that I should feel bound to serve him to the best of my power . . . but only if it were pleasing to V. S. Illustriss. . . . The Pope replied that he would write to V. S. Illustriss, but he was sure it would be a great advantage for you to have some one to serve your interests at the Court of Cæsar [the Emperor]. . . . This is quite a new idea to me, but I did not wish to oppose the will of His Holiness, and also the service of V. S. Illustriss. The decision remains with you. . . ."

Only one answer was possible from the Marchese, and when this arrived Castiglione wrote to his mother on August 4 and tried to break the matter gently to her, fearing that she would be distressed. ". . . Nostro

Signore thinks of sending me to Spain to be with the Emperor and treat with him about universal peace throughout Christendom . . . thus I have accepted from my soul's desire to acquire merit with God and praise and honour with men, and possibly to render other great service. Therefore I pray Vostra Signoria to be content, and to remain of good cheer, because I hope that this going may be for my peace. . . ."

The whole soul of the man is revealed as clear as crystal in these simple words, which are most pathetic in the light of coming disaster. It has been well said that "to serve one master loyally and to speak truth to him without fear or favour had been Castiglione's practice throughout his career. As like as not Pope Clement had been attracted to him by his frankness and honesty — two qualities which exercise a singular fascination over men incapable of either. But it is a desperate blunder for a double-dealer to imagine that he can make an efficient tool of an honest man. He cannot, for the simple and profoundly ironic reason that he cannot bring himself to trust him."[1] Dim shadows hung over the future, but the gallant knight went forward bravely to meet it; he accepted fatal responsibility and exile to an unknown land, in the spirit of a confessor or a martyr.

It was no lure of wealth which attracted him, as we see in one of the last letters to his mother which have been preserved:

"If Vostra Signoria were told that the Pope had given me 150 ducats of salary, you would not believe it; and indeed it is quite a joke throughout Rome. It is true that the office of Collector of Spain, which I

[1] Walter Raleigh.

have, is great and useful, and also the powers are of importance; but the salary is such as I have never had before. Our Lord God will do with me that which seemeth good to Him. . . . In Roma alli 17 di Settembre, MDXXIV." He writes again on the 1st of October: ". . . The day after to-morrow I leave Rome if it please God, and I go to Mantua, by way of Loreto, where I have a vow (at the famous shrine of the Virgin). Will V. S. give orders to prepare the rooms and especially the stables, for it will be necessary to use those of M. Tommaso, and perhaps those of other neighbours, because I believe that there will be with me about 20 or 30 horses. Will V. S. see that there is straw, and some little hay and oats for the horses? I will send word three days before my coming, and will state the exact day. With all my heart I commend myself to you, and to all of ours."

The Marchese Federico, knowing that Castiglione had great influence with a famous pupil of Raphael's, Giulio Romano, begged him to persuade his friend to come and settle in Mantua, that he might decorate his palace. "With many entreaties and promises" the Count succeeded in obtaining the Pope's permission, and inducing the painter to return with him. He also brought certain models and plans of a villa and gardens, by Michelangelo, for the Marchesa Isabella, but these appear to have been too costly to carry out. The work of Giulio Romano remains to this day the glory of Mantua, in the Castello and the Palazzo della Giustizia.

Isabella d'Este was very pleased that "il Magnifico Baldassare Castiglione" was appointed the Pope's Nunzio in Spain, as she had decided to send her younger son Ferrante to the Court of the Emperor,

and the Count had written to her from Rome: ". . . I shall often wish myself back in Mantua when I am in Spain, but I shall find consolation in serving the Sig. Ferrante until God suffers me to return and seek the rest which I need at my time of life. . . ." (At this date he was forty-six years of age.)

With all his high aims and friendly commissions, Castiglione was at length equipped for his departure, and took leave of his home, his mother, and his three young children—all that made life precious to him—which he was never to see again. Of this eventful journey to Spain we have the fullest accounts in his letters to the "Datario" (Head of Papal Secretaries), Messer Matteo Giberto, one of the two men who had the greatest influence with Clement VII. He was on the side of France, while the other Papal favourite, Niccolò Schomberg, Archbishop of Capua, took the part of the Emperor. The Pope had declared himself neutral in this great struggle between Spain and France, but he had secretly concluded a treaty of alliance (on December 12, 1524) with Francis I, who had again invaded Italy and was besieging Pavia. Meanwhile Castiglione, in absolute ignorance of this treachery, had orders to meet the Duke of Milan and the Viceroy Lannoy in Cremona, and to assure them of the unchanging favour of the Pope. Then he was to go to Milan, where he was received with the greatest honour by La Trémouille, who was in command, and next was directed to seek an interview with the French king in the camp before Pavia.

26 December, 1524. Al Signor Datario (Giovan Matteo Giberti). ". . . To-day I went into the camp and did homage to the King and gave him the Brief

. . . and told him about my going to the Emperor, together with . . . all the intentions of His Holiness, who desires nothing but the general peace and quiet of Christendom, without respect of persons. . . . The King, with many words well spoken and with much courtesy, replied to me that he was quite certain that Nostro Signore would do nothing without the highest motives; and that His Holiness had never had a more obedient and affectionate son than himself. . . . Then with infinite reasoning he tried to justify the occasion of his war . . . and showed that those who said that he disturbed the peace of Europe were wrong; because he only asked for that which was his by right . . . and so continued, showing great reverence to Nostro Signore and firm hope of victory. . . ."

We can imagine the amusement of the Most Christian King, with the secret treaty in his possession, pouring out all these platitudes to the simple-minded honest ambassador, who was, however, shrewd enough to see that the condition of the French troops was by no means satisfactory, and that they had far more respect for the imperial army than they would own.

After this episode, Castiglione continued his journey, and by way of Susa crossed the Alps and reached Lyons. Here he found the city in festivity, "as there had come news that the Pope and the Venetians had joined in alliance with the Most Christian King, friend of his friends, foe of his foes. The particulars have not yet arrived, but there are processions and great rejoicing . . ." so the ambassador writes to Cardinal Salviati on January 11, 1525. It seems to us extraordinary that Castiglione should be so full of his splendid dreams of universal peace and goodwill

throughout Christendom, that he does not see the true meaning of all these reports. Everywhere he has so warm a welcome and so much personal respect, that all combines to keep him in a charmed slumber. Passing through Barcelona and Saragossa (on March 11, 1525), he reaches Madrid, where he is received with the greatest honour and pleasure by the Emperor Charles and all his Court.

He is met with the news of the battle of Pavia, which had taken place on February 24, when the French were totally defeated, Francis I was taken prisoner, and his most distinguished generals were killed or captured. This victory practically made Charles V master of the fate of Europe, but the young prince of twenty-four behaved on this occasion with extraordinary moderation. He offered thanksgiving to God, but forbade all public rejoicing in Madrid; "for this is not a time, when a Christian King has fallen under such misfortune." As Castiglione writes to the Papal Secretary: "Every one has shown more joy than His Majesty, and it is impossible to describe the modesty of his behaviour."

Under the first shock of this event, Clement VII at once endeavoured to make terms with the Viceroy Lannoy, and sent Cardinal Salviati to join Castiglione in Spain, that together they might persuade the Emperor to ratify this agreement. Accordingly they presented a "Memorial" from the Pope, in which he congratulated Charles on his victory, tried to excuse any favour which he might have shown to the French, and ended by urging the Emperor to undertake an expedition against the infidels, "because at this time, poor Italy, afflicted and overwhelmed with so many

calamities, trembles, seeing herself exposed as a prey to the violence of the Turks. . . ." Charles at once replied by means of the Nuncio in most pious language, thanking the Pontiff and assuring him of his fidelity . . . and his desire to co-operate for the destruction of the Turk. . . ."

We all know how much sincerity there was in the protests on either side. But Castiglione, in his reverence for both Pope and Emperor, appears to have believed in them, and writes quite a cheerful letter to the Marchesa Isabella giving her news of her son. ". . . I am in good health, thank God, and although at first all seems strange to me here, I am growing accustomed to the usages of Spain, and these gentlemen show me much friendship. The Illustrious Sig. Ferrante went to S. Jacopo di Gallicia a week ago. He is very well, in great favour with Cæsar, and made much of by all the Spanish nobles. . . . April 6, 1525. In Madrid."

He wrote the lady another letter in July following, from Toledo, in which he recommends Isabella, who was now staying in Rome, to continue her journey to Spain and pay a visit to the famous shrine of S. Jacopo in Gallicia before she goes home. The Marchesa had always wished to do this, and she would see so many beautiful places on the road that she would enjoy her travels, the love for which was inborn in her. But this wish was not realised, and the two friends never met again.

The Marquis of Pescara had contributed in no small degree to the victory of Pavia, and Castiglione wrote to congratulate his wife, Vittoria Colonna, whose intimate acquaintance he had made in Rome:

"Illustrissima Signora mia. . . . In order to express my joy in the glorious success of the Illustrissimo Signor suo Consorte, a letter seems too common a thing . . . and yet fireworks, fêtes, concerts, songs, and other such demonstrations seem to me less than the concert of my own soul . . . and you will understand me, although my words fail to express all that I feel. . . . As for my service towards you, I pray you ask yourself, and believe yourself . . . for all the world may see it shining through my soul, as in the purest crystal. Thus I remain, kissing your hands, and commending myself humbly to your good favour. In Madrid, March 21, MDXXV."

Amongst various other letters this summer is one to the famous Marchesa Ippolita Fioramonda, di Scaldasole, in which Castiglione speaks of her as a lady valiant in arms, and not only beautiful but warlike as Ippolita the Amazon; and adds that when he "came to the camp at Pavia, those walls, those ramparts, those towers, that artillery, all spoke to me of Your Highness, knowing that you were within, eager to fight against so great a prince as the King of France. . . ." Of this lady, we are told by Giovio that in time of peace her favourite dress was of "heavenly blue satin, sprinkled with butterflies embroidered in gold," supposed to be an allegory to discourage her admirers. (Blue was a sign of heavenly aspirations, and once, at a dance, the Marchesa had pointed to her sky-blue dress, and remarked to her admiring partner, young De Lescun, "You see, I do as your guards, who fix a tassel to their horses' cruppers, to warn people not to approach too near.")

But the Papal Nuncio had far more serious matters

to occupy the few remaining years of his life than courtly letters to noble ladies. A most tremendous task was entrusted to him, whose hopelessness he did not realise entirely until the tragic end. He wrote constant letters to all the most important members of the Papal Court, and occasionally to the Pope himself, keeping them informed of all matters of importance which took place at the Court of the Emperor, giving his careful judgment on the political events of the day, and always using his utmost efforts to bring the Emperor and the Pope into sincere and perfect agreement. This, he felt sure, could alone give peace to Christendom and security to the Church. He dwelt much upon the strong religious feeling of Charles V, and assured His Holiness that the young prince had shown such modesty in the hour of triumph, that he felt certain, the greater the power of the Emperor became, the greater would be the universal good of Christendom. The conclusion of the whole matter was that—"Without union with Cæsar, neither a general peace, nor union against the infidels, nor any other good result would ever be attained."

Such was the deliberate and unchanging opinion of Castiglione, who was so highly esteemed by the Emperor that he had constant opportunities of intimate conversation with him during all the eventful period which followed the victory of Pavia. As we know, Francis I by his own request, was taken to Spain, where he hoped much from a personal interview with his captor. But the terms demanded for his ransom appeared to him so exorbitant that he refused to accept them. The King, who was accustomed to a life of outdoor sports, found his health affected by this close

confinement, and his devoted sister Marguerite came to Madrid to see him, and used her utmost efforts to obtain his release. The letters of Castiglione give us very full details of all the subsequent negotiations, which finally resulted in the Treaty of Madrid, signed on January 14, 1526. Francis was to marry Eléonore, the Emperor's eldest sister, widow of the King of Portugal. He was to give up to Charles the Duchy of Burgundy, always a contested right since the death of Charles the Bold, and the French were to withdraw entirely from Italy. These were some of the most important conditions, but there was another which touched most sharply the French king's pride. He was asked to forgive his rebellious kinsman, the great Constable of France, Duc de Bourbon, and restore to him his vast possessions which had been confiscated.

A few words will be necessary to explain the position of Charles de Bourbon, who plays so important a part in the later tragedy, and whom we already know as the son of Chiara Gonzaga and the gallant Duc de Montpensier, who died at Pozzuoli in 1496. His marriage with Susanne, the only daughter of Anne de Beaujeu, had brought him the immense inheritance of Bourbon, but on the death of Susanne in 1521 he had been deprived of his estates by the jealous intrigues of Louise, the King's mother, and in his thirst for revenge Charles de Bourbon had offered his services to the Emperor. He was gladly welcomed, though he brought only his name and his sword ; he even aspired to marry one of the sisters of Charles V, and was high amongst the victorious generals at the battle of Pavia. Such successful rebellion was not easy to for-

*Alinari, Photo*

VITTORIA COLONNA, MARCHESA DI PESCARA

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give, but when Francis I at length signed the Treaty of Madrid, it was with the deliberate intention of breaking his solemn oath, and a few stipulations more or less were of no consequence.

During these past months diplomacy had been busy on all sides, as we see plainly in the letters of the Papal Nuncio. The Pope had been thoroughly alarmed by the disaster of Pavia, and still more when Francis had been taken to Spain. He was weak and vacillating, and tried secretly to find out if he could form an Italian league against the Emperor. Venice was secured, and Francesco Sforza, Duke of Milan, seemed to hesitate. Although Charles had no definite knowledge of all this, he yet had misgivings as to the Pope's intentions, and sent word to his ambassador in Rome, the Duke of Sessa, to keep a close watch on the progress of events. Castiglione, who was also kept in the dark, was in much anxiety about the feeling in Rome and the suspicious attitude of the Pope towards the Emperor.

At length he even went so far as to write a most beautiful and eloquent letter to Clement himself, in which he touches upon all the points at issue. He enters into minute details of the tangled web of politics in a statesmanlike manner, and solemnly asserts that from all he has seen of the Emperor he feels sure that with his increasing power he will show more humanity, clemency, and goodness, and that if the Pope will but enter into close and firm alliance with His Majesty, he will never regret it. The letter ends thus :

"I have desired for once to satisfy myself by this letter, which is written only to testify my affection and cordial service to Your Holiness . . . not for the

hatred or love which I bear to any prince in this world, for I am only constrained by your interest alone; that is the only target at which my arrows are aimed. And thus may our Lord God give me power to serve you acceptably, as above all things I desire, and so I remain, humbly kissing the feet of Your Holiness. In Toledo. December 18, MDXXV."

This letter gives the keynote of the devoted ambassador's work in Spain. But all his earnest efforts were in vain and his words of wisdom were unheeded, for the Medici Pope was now under other influences, and followed out his path of tortuous dissimulation to the end.

Clement VII had already much to answer for. There can be little doubt that through his agent Giberti he was privy to the conspiracy of Morone, the Milanese Chancellor, for which the Duke of Milan was afterwards made the scapegoat, and turned out of his dominions. In this the Marchese of Pescara appears to have been almost persuaded to join, in his first outburst of indignation at losing credit and profit after his victory at Pavia, when Francis I was removed to Spain. The question of Pescara's guilt has always been one of the unanswered questions of history, but in any case he betrayed Morone to the Emperor, and soon afterwards fell ill of a mysterious complaint, attributed to mental anxiety and remorse by his enemies, and died in November, 1525, in ill-repute with the world, although his memory was so long idolised by his wife, Vittoria Colonna. A very interesting letter of condolence is preserved from Count Castiglione, in which he says: "I have not dared to write to Vostra Signoria before, lest I should say that which you could

not bear without extreme sorrow. Now that the calamities which have happened are so great, that, like the universal deluge, they have made the misery of all equal . . . for we know nothing, and that which seems to us true may be false, and that which here we hold for false may be true. . . . Therefore, as before I held that Vostra Signoria had died in your Consort of glorious memory, so now, beholding with a more true judgment, I hold that the Signore Marchese lives in Vostra Signoria; thus it seems to me that all the virtue of the divine soul in one and the other, have attained to immortality . . . and so I think that what we look upon here as so much tribulation, will soon be a passing dream, which is indeed true. . . ."

The lonely man had lost many friends of late, and amongst them the Cardinal Sigismondo Gonzaga, who died at Mantua in October, 1525, and a few months later his sister, the beloved Duchess Elisabetta of Urbino, the best and truest friend of Castiglione, who thus mentions her in the introduction to the *Cortegiano*. "But that which cannot be spoken of without tears is that the Duchessa is also dead. And if my mind be troubled with the loss of so many friends and good lords of mine, that have left me in this life, as it were, in a wilderness full of sorrow . . . with how much more grief do I bear the affliction of the death of my Signora Duchessa than of all the others, because she was more worthy than all, and I was more bounden to her than to all the rest."

Even in the dark hour of so heavy a loss, there must have been a mournful satisfaction in the remembrance that he had always remained a loyal and devoted servitor of his dear lady, alike in prosperity and

adversity, serving her in every way and keeping up a faithful correspondence with her until the end. In his last letter to the Duchess he says: ". . . If you know of anything in which I can serve you, in this matter or any other, I pray you to command me, as this will give me the most singular delight; and most humbly I kiss the hands of Vostra Eccellentissima."

The loss of Elisabetta Gonzaga was deeply felt by her many friends. Her sister-in-law, Isabella d'Este, who was then living in Rome, sincerely mourned her as "the most rare lady whom this age has known"; the Pope expressed the greatest regret for a "princess of such rare gifts and singular excellence," who had been a devoted friend to him in the days of his poverty and exile; and Pietro Bembo wrote that "he had seen many noble women . . . but in the Duchess alone were all virtues united . . she had no equal."

## CHAPTER X

### 1526-1527

TREATY OF MADRID—FRANCIS I BREAKS HIS WORD—LEAGUE OF COGNAC—CHARLES V MARRIES ISABEL OF PORTUGAL—COLONNA RAID ON ROME—DISMAY OF CASTIGLIONE—HIS EFFORTS FOR A FIRM ALLIANCE BETWEEN THE POPE AND THE EMPEROR—BATTLE OF MOHACS (LOUIS OF HUNGARY DEFEATED AND KILLED BY THE TURKS)—FRUNDSBERG AND CHARLES OF BOURBON INVADE ITALY—THE TAKING AND THE SACK OF ROME—BOURBON KILLED—POPE CLEMENT A PRISONER.

THE Treaty of Madrid was signed on January 14, 1526, and Francis I was set at liberty on the French frontier on March 17, leaving his two young sons as hostages. The Emperor appears to have been almost alone in trusting to the oath of the King, for no one was surprised when Francis first delayed and then refused to ratify the treaty which he had so solemnly agreed to. The next move in the game took place at Cognac on May 22, when a League was entered into by the Pope, the French king, Venice, and the Duke of Milan "to promote the peace of Christendom."

This was a terrible blow to Castiglione, who wrote to the Archbishop of Capua (the former favourite of Clement, but now under a shadow as he was known to be an Imperialist) lamenting the conduct of the Pope. "For I believe that from this League only war can follow, as this is the natural desire of the Most

Christian King, who desires glory for himself, and for the past only wishes for revenge. . . . And in case of war, whichever side may succeed, it will be ruinous for the Pope . . . and will provoke the enmity of the Emperor, who still bears goodwill towards His Holiness, if I am not the most ignorant man in the world. . . ."

The ambassador had remained in Toledo to be near the Emperor most of the winter, and mentions his ill-health as a reason why he had not gone to see the departure of the French king. But Charles had specially insisted on the Count's coming to Seville in March, on the occasion of his marriage with his cousin, the beautiful Isabel of Portugal, and we hear of the great festivities with which she was welcomed. The alliance was most popular in Spain and Portugal, for it was a bond of union between the two adjoining kingdoms, and the immense dowry which she brought with her was most welcome to Charles, with his heavy war expenses. For the war in Italy had recommenced, and the Imperial army in the Milanese had been without pay, and was compelled to live by spoiling the inhabitants.

Castiglione had the unwelcome mission from the Pope of inviting the Emperor to join the League, but on such terms that Charles declared it was meant for his destruction; and he was most indignant at the Brief presented to him from Pope Clement, which amongst other complaints accused him of troubling the peace of Christendom with his wars. Two or three days later another Brief arrived, much more temperate in tone, with a message that the first was not to be presented. But it was too late, and on September 17,

1526, Charles wrote a letter fully stating all the evil doings of the Pope, which he caused to be printed in Spain, Germany, and the Netherlands.

In order to make terms with Clement, and also to obtain exact information, the Emperor had previously sent a special envoy, Ugo de Moncado by name, an unscrupulous old soldier who had served under Cæsare Borgia. In one of his letters to Rome, Castiglione expresses his strong disapproval of this man being selected, and he is more than justified by the event. Finding he could make no impression upon the Pope, Moncado made common cause with the powerful Colonna family, and at this critical moment the death of the Spanish Ambassador, the Duke of Sessa, left the unprincipled envoy free to carry out an audacious scheme of his own. On the 20th of September, when the Pope was still overwhelmed with the terrible news of the Turkish victory on the plain of Mohàcs, where Louis of Hungary and all the chivalry of his realm fell before the might of the Infidel—his terror lest the Vatican should next be attacked was forgotten in the sudden inroad of a nearer foe. The Colonna tribe, with their armed retainers and some Spanish troops under Don Ugo, entered Rome by the Lateran Gate and sacked the Papal palace, the rich altars of St. Peter's, and the dwellings of some of the cardinals. The Pope fled for refuge to the Castell Sant' Angelo, and hastily made terms with Moncado, promising to withdraw his troops from Lombardy, give up the League, and pardon the Colonna.

But when once the peril was over, Clement made no scruple of breaking his word. He sent, indeed, for some of his troops, but when they arrived he at once

proceeded to storm all the castles of the Colonna, and carry ruin and desolation amongst their dependents and helpless peasantry, with "cruelty worse than that of the Turks in Hungary."

It was a curious coincidence that on September 20, the very day of the Colonna raid, Castiglione had succeeded in obtaining from the Emperor a conciliatory memorandum, written by his own hand in Spanish:

"Nuncio, as you have already received the answer which I made to the Brief of His Holiness, which I could not avoid doing to defend myself from so many accusations which were made against me without reason or cause, I pray you, in order that His Holiness may receive it without offence, and that he may know my intention, which I have so fully declared . . . because I am certain that, knowing it, His Holiness will see that he has every reason to treat me as a good Father, and I will be his humble son; and I assure you that I do not lie. De my mano yo el Rey."

The ambassador's mind was quite set at rest by this, and he says: "The 'polizza' which I enclose appears to me no small testimony to His Majesty's good will." We can conceive poor Castiglione's dismay when the bad news arrived from Rome; and from his account, it was with a feeling of horror and stupefaction that both the Emperor and all the Court heard of the assault on the Vatican. The Count himself has not the slightest doubt of the entire disapproval of Charles, and in a letter of many pages gives the fullest particulars to the Archbishop of Capua. Don Francesco di Mendoza, who brought the news from Rome, says that the Pope is anxious to come to Spain and settle the whole matter with the Emperor. Castiglione wel-

comes this idea with the greatest satisfaction, and is most eager that it should be carried out. He gives a number of arguments, uses all possible persuasion, and says that the people of Spain, who are most religious in their observances, "have so much ardent desire and devotion towards His Holiness, that they will all hasten to adore him, with so many tears, so much love and reverence, that they will seem ready to die of joy." Then the Pope and the Emperor will together settle this absolutely needful crusade against the Turks. For distressing as the incident of the Colonna attack might be, it was half forgotten in the terrible disaster which had overwhelmed all Christendom, when King Louis and his whole army were slain on the fatal field of Mohàcs. Hungary, so long the frontier kingdom and the bulwark of Europe, was at the mercy of the Sultan, who was no more a distant terror, to be used as a form of rhetoric when convenient, but a very present and so far invincible foe, advancing to universal conquest.

With the Turk at our gates, and the very existence of the Christian world in peril, is this a time for our natural champions, the Pope and the Emperor, to indulge in petty disputes about a few towns in Italy, or for the Most Christian King (title held by kings of France since Louis XI) to forget everything but his own aggrandisement?

Such was the spirit of the Nuncio's pathetic and imploring appeal to Clement VII, through his secretary. But to Charles V himself it was a far more deadly reality; he was wounded in the most vulnerable point of his family affection. When England and Portugal had been satisfied to give vain promises of help,

the Emperor had, with immense difficulty, sent some troops to help his brother-in-law, but they arrived too late, when the fatal stroke had fallen. His widowed sister, Queen Marie of Hungary, made despairing appeal to him, and his brother Ferdinand, whose wife Anne was sister of the unfortunate Louis, had the first claim to the throne of Hungary, but could do nothing without powerful help. Indeed, he would be the next victim, for his dominions were on the high road of conquest, and the magnitude of the need was so great that all else sank into insignificance before it.

Castiglione writes from Granada, where the Emperor was holding his Court, and he adds a postscript to say that another messenger has arrived from the Infante (Ferdinand) saying that he fears Austria will be lost. He adds that it is believed that the Vaivoda of Transylvania will try to become King of Hungary, making terms with the Turk, and that it is feared the King of Poland will do the same in order to obtain Bohemia. . . . The Lutherans are behaving as usual (in rebellion). . . . The Emperor is still anxiously expecting M. Paolo d'Arezzo, who was to go to the French king first, as the Pope's envoy, to promote peace. . . . (He did not arrive until the following January, too late to be of any use.)

Signor Cesare Ferramosca was sent by Charles as ambassador to Rome, in the place of the Duke of Sessa, and the Nuncio sent a memorial to the Pope by him, in which he earnestly prays that his "journey to Spain may be no longer delayed, that the winds and the sea and the sky may be propitious to his holy intention, and that fortune may hasten him and remove all impediments. . . . May our Lord God give us

grace to see the coming of the Pope into Spain, which I believe will be the salubrious cure for all evils." It is more than doubtful whether Clement ever had any serious intention of going to meet the Emperor. But Castiglione was so absolutely honest himself that he believed other people, although he could not help feeling that as an ambassador he had been much neglected, as often he had no news or instructions from Rome for many months together.

Meantime the plot was thickening in Italy, and the greatest tragedy of the Renaissance was steadily drawing near to its close. The Pope, in his blindness and folly, his vacillation and treachery, was bringing down upon himself swift and fatal retribution.

Towards the end of 1526 a new element had entered into the tangled politics of distracted Italy. The Constable of Bourbon, having failed to deliver the Milanese as he had sworn to do, withdrew to Germany, where he saw a fresh opening. Since the First Diet of Worms, the Lutheran princes, grateful for some measure of tolerance on the part of the Emperor, were on friendly terms with him. In this Bourbon saw his opportunity, and he had no great difficulty in persuading some of these soldiers of fortune to join him, as the representative of Charles, in a raid upon Papal oppression, and also the wealthy cities of Italy, where he promised them untold riches. The result was that Georg Frundsberg, Prince of Mindelheim, promised to join the Constable in Italy, and collected a motley army of Swabians, Franconians, Bavarians, and Tyrolese, all young and active, besides a strong contingent of pious Landsknechte, the most powerful infantry in Europe. These were mostly armed with a long lance carried

over the shoulder, and were clad in a striped dress of various colours. We are assured that of the 11,000 followers of Frundsberg there were 4000 fanatics who served without pay, in a kind of religious crusade against Catholicism.

These German levies set forth in November, and crossed over into Italy by some little-known passes between the Lake of Garda and the Lake of Idro, and descended into the territory of Brescia. On December 1 they reached Frosinone, and were decoyed by the Marchese of Mantua into a trap—the swamps and ditches on the banks of the Po, near Governolo—where they were attacked by Giovanni delle Bande Nere, with the pick of the Papal army, which Clement had left with the young Medici captain, in defiance of his promise to Moncado. However, by their splendid steadiness the Landsknechte escaped, and the brave Giovanni was mortally wounded, and carried to Mantua through a snowstorm. In the letters of his friend Pietro Aretino there remains a most touching account of the beloved captain's death, and farewell to his friend the Duke of Urbino, who now, instead of attacking the enemy, retreated towards the Venetian frontier.

His cautious policy throughout is most difficult to understand. At this time his army was larger than that of Frundsberg, and he might have prevented the junction with the forces of the Constable of Bourbon at Fiorenzuola, which took place on February 7. The Duke Francesco Maria is accused by some historians of wilful delay in fighting for the Medici Pope, whose cousin Leo X had deprived him of his dominions. But this may be to some extent accounted for by the fact that, as general of the Venetian forces, he was always

accompanied by a *providitore*, or official spy, to whom he had to explain and justify all his plans; and it would not be in accordance with the cold, selfish policy of Venice to risk anything by heroic devotion to the cause of the Pope, whose real intentions were doubtful. As it has been well observed, "What army commanded by a debating club ever escaped discomfiture and disgrace?"[1] We know that the Providitore Emo prevented the Duke from crossing the Oglio early in the campaign, and often paralysed his operations at an important point. Still, the fact remains that these tactics of retreat did more than anything else to ensure the success of the Imperialists. Alfonso of Ferrara did not join the forces of the League in person, but he suffered them to pass through his territory and supplied them with money and provisions.

The Duke of Ferrara might have joined the League of Cognac, but the Pope was unwise enough to demand such impossible terms that the Duke and his subjects declared "they would rather call in the Grand Turk or the devil himself than be enslaved by priests." Alfonso had therefore no choice but to take the side of the Emperor.

Frundsberg and Bourbon with their united forces (which are sometimes stated at 30,000 men, including the Landsknechte, also Spaniards and Italians composed of men-at-arms and light cavalry), meeting with no opposition, passed on southwards, ravaging and plundering everything on their way. The ill-disciplined host reached San Giovanni, near Bologna, on February 28, and here remained for several weeks, in torrents of rain, and almost destitute of any sup-

[1] Macaulay.

plies. At length a mutiny broke out from scarcity of food, and the soldiers noisily clamoured with furious threats for their pay. Twelve thousand ducats from Ferrara were distributed amongst them, and in vain Frundsberg tried to pacify them with words of hope and promise; but in their despairing rage they would not listen, and some of the ringleaders even levelled their spears at him. This defiance and rebellion is said to have broken the great general's heart; he sank down upon a drum and never spoke again. He was carried unconscious to Ferrara, and lingered for a while until death brought release. Bourbon was left in a terrible position with this rebellious host, and knew himself to be in fact their servant and not their master.

This was the condition of the camp when, on March 19, a messenger arrived from Lannoy, the Viceroy of Naples, with news that an armistice had been concluded with the Pope. Clement had been playing his old game of vacillation and bad faith, for on his first panic of alarm on hearing of this barbarian invasion, he had declared himself willing to accept any terms of peace; but as soon as his army met with a slight success at Frosinone, he withdrew his word, and declared that he would continue the war. Thus no one knew what to believe or how far to trust him. As we have seen, the Constable of Bourbon was not a free agent, and when, on March 23, Cesare Ferramosca, the Emperor's ambassador, actually arrived with the signed treaty, all that could be done was to summon the various captains of the army and explain the matter to them. The Spanish and German mercenaries were furious at the prospect of losing everything, after all they had endured; even their payment in full—an im-

possible amount—would scarcely have satisfied them; their cry was to march on, and the ambassador Ferramosca had to flee for his life. The Marchese di Guasto, Pescara's nephew, was the only general who protested. "If you disobey the Emperor's orders, I cannot fight contrary to his command"; and he withdrew with his forces to Ferrara.

The tumultuous advance continued, and made for the valley of the Arno with every appearance of threatening Florence, but the Duke of Urbino was at hand to protect the city, and on April 21 Lannoy met the army of Bourbon with 100,000 ducats which he had raised with immense difficulty. But the mercenaries now demanded twice that amount, and Lannoy, in alarm for his personal safety, retreated to Siena, while the motley army, ever increasing on the way, turned aside over the passes of the Apennines, by the great high road to the Papal city. Bourbon had sent a messenger who reached the Pope on April 7, saying that the troops were determined to advance, and he was a prisoner in their midst. Yet no one appears to have realised how serious was the situation; the English and French envoys and the Spanish secretary believed that a hostile demonstration might be made against Rome and money demanded, but that the barbarian host would pass on to Naples and hold it in pledge for their pay. On April 23 Clement was so full of confidence that he revoked the treaty which he had made with Lannoy, on the ground of the enemy's trickery, and once more joined the League, collecting all the troops he could raise, under the command of Renzo da Ceri, and doubtless trusting to the coming of the Duke of Urbino.

On May 4 Bourbon and his forces had passed through Viterbo and arrived at Isola Farnese, six miles from Rome, from whence he sent a trumpeter with a letter to the Pope, expecting to receive terms of peace and an offer of money. But no answer was sent to this last appeal, and the fate of Rome was sealed.

The invading army did not wait for the belated artillery, but made their attack in the early dawn of May 6 by a primitive way, with ladders taken from the vineyards near, to scale the low walls on the Vatican hill, between the gates Santo Spirito and San Pancrazio. The cannon of Sant' Angelo checked the assault for a brief space, when the Constable of Bourbon, in his silver armour shining through the mist, sprang forward and, seizing a ladder, called upon his men to follow. A minute later and he fell to the ground, mortally wounded.

Philibert Prince of Orange was supposed to take the command, but when a breach had been made in the walls and the whole city was taken by assault during that day of slaughter, the soldiers, mad with success, were beyond all control, and gave way to every savage instinct, until the scenes which followed were beyond all description. The Pope and some of the cardinals had barely time to seek refuge in the Castell Sant' Angelo.

Historians have laboured in vain to make us realise the full horrors of that awful Sack of Rome at the hands of wild and brutal soldiery. The Eternal City "was at the mercy, not of a conquering army, but of a host of demons inspired only with avarice, cruelty, and lust. . . . They rushed like a pack of wolves on

*Hanfstaengl, Photo* *Titian*

LODOVICO ARIOSTO

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the defenceless people. . . . Each nation contributed its worst qualities. . . . The Spaniards excelled in deliberate cruelty. The Lutherans desecrated the churches, and rejoiced to burn and defile what all the world had adored." For eight days the reign of terror continued unchecked; more than 4000 people are said to have perished, while all who could, escaped by flight.

Amongst these was Isabella d'Este, Marchesa of Mantua, who for the last two years had found a pleasant home in the Palazzo Colonna. One of her reasons for going to Rome had been the desire to see her younger son Ercole made a cardinal, and when the army of Bourbon was at the gates of the city she at length found her opportunity. For Clement, in his despairing need of money, had at that critical moment offered to sell the dignity of cardinal, and on May 3 nominated five at 40,000 ducats each, when Isabella eagerly seized the opportunity of obtaining the coveted honour for her son. The Constable of Bourbon was her nephew and she felt safe, for after his death she was protected by her youngest son Ferrante, and when at last she was able to escape from the port of Ostia, it was with the supreme satisfaction of taking the cardinal's hat with her.

Clement, a prisoner in Sant' Angelo, completely lost his nerve and did nothing, either by command or encouragement of his troops, or by negotiation, to lighten the situation. He was constantly expecting the army of the League to come to his rescue. Why the Duke of Urbino made no attempt to enter Rome we fail to understand. Ariosto evidently shared the same feeling, for he writes:

Vedete gli homicidii e le rapine
In ogni parte far Roma dolente:
E con incendi e stupri le divine
E le profane cose ire ugualmente.
Il campo de la Lega le ruine
Mira d'appresso, e'l pianto e'l grido sente,
E dove ir dovria inanzi, torna in dietro,
E prender lascia il successor di Pietro.

(*Orlando Furioso*, xxxiii. 55.)

(See murder and rapine on every side causes Rome to lament; and with fire and outrage both things divine and worldly are swept away. The army of the League near at hand, watches the devastation, and hears the cries and lamentation, and where it should advance forward, it turns back and suffers the successor of Peter to be taken.)

It is true that the Pope asked for some one to make terms with, but when Gattinara went to the fortress he found Clement in tears, surrounded by his thirteen cardinals, and quite unwilling to make any definite arrangement. He hoped to get better terms by delay, and sent for Lannoy, who was in ill-favour with the army of occupation, and could do nothing to help the unhappy Pontiff. He was compelled later, on June 5, to agree to everything: to pay 400,000 ducats for the arrears due to the army; to surrender Ostia, Civita Vecchia, Piacenza, Parma, and Modena; to restore the Colonna, and to revoke all excommunications of those who had opposed him. Clement remained a prisoner, the Prince of Orange resigned his command, and Lannoy, who succeeded him, died of the plague which raged in Rome during the nine months when the city was at the mercy of the lawless soldiery. The Pope had been compelled to give seven hostages, and amongst them was Giovan Matteo Giberti, the Datario, to whom

Castiglione wrote so many of his letters. Giberti was a man of high character and attainments, but fatally wrong in his political views, as he was always opposed to a sincere alliance with the Emperor. After his fifty-three days of imprisonment as Papal hostage, when he was brutally ill-treated by the soldiers, he gave up all his worldly ambitions and retired to his see at Verona, where he lived until 1543, a saintly and reforming bishop. He was an intimate friend of Vittoria Colonna, and much of their interesting correspondence has been preserved.

We must now follow the news of Rome's desolation to Spain, where the Emperor and his Court received it with unfeigned dismay and horror. The Imperial Commissioner spared his master nothing; he told the bare revolting story of ravaged homes, of pillage and rapine and murder; and the pious Emperor must have shuddered at the awful desecration of holy places and sacred things—of all that he revered and adored.

In seeking to measure how far Charles was responsible, we must consider how far he who wills a deed is to blame for its consequences. In employing the services of Bourbon, the Emperor had deliberately let loose a destroying power of unknown strength which, in the event, was to overpass all bounds and become an overwhelming deluge, such as no man could check. Yet the sack of Rome—stupendous as was the ruin and disaster not to the city alone, but for the civilised world, for the literary and artistic life of humanity—was no unique disaster, as many a fair city of Italy could bear witness that such events were an ever-present danger from an army of fierce and destitute mercenaries.

As for the Pope, he had gone to meet his fate; when he took the sword in hand he accepted the fortune and peril of war. As he had kept faith with no one, so could he expect none to keep faith with him. "Even in his own game of Italian duplicity he had suffered himself to be outwitted."

## CHAPTER XI

### 1527-1529

AFTER THE SACK OF ROME—THE GRIEF AND DESPAIR OF CASTIGLIONE—HIS JUSTIFICATION TO THE POPE—MANY LETTERS—CONTROVERSY WITH VALDÈZ—INDISCRETION OF VITTORIA COLONNA WITH REGARD TO THE "CORTEGIANO" —CASTIGLIONE PUBLISHES HIS GREAT WORK—LETTER TO HIS CHILDREN—DEATH OF BALDASSARE CASTIGLIONE—SORROW OF THE EMPEROR, THE POPE, AND HIS MANY FRIENDS—BRIEF ACCOUNT OF THE POETICAL WORKS OF CASTIGLIONE.

FROM the fatal close of that great drama on which the eyes of the world were fixed, we turn to the pathetic tragedy of one human soul. What remains for us to say of Count Baldassare Castiglione, Papal Nuncio at the Court of the Emperor in Spain, the innocent victim of disastrous and intolerable strife which he would have given his life to avert?

After the sack of Rome on May 6, 1527, all his eager hopes were crushed in the dust. The gallant courtier, the ideal ambassador for whose service princes contested, was a broken and discredited man. From the beginning, his position at the Court of Spain had been futile and misleading. Pope Clement had never dared to tell the Nuncio his real wishes and intentions, and in the midst of his own constant vacillation, had sent him the most vague and scanty instructions. As we have seen, during the whole period Castiglione,

with anxious devotion, had written constant letters to the Datario (Giberti), the Archbishop of Capua, in the Pope's intimate service, and from time to time had even made a strong appeal to Clement himself. The Nuncio is held in sincere affection by the Emperor and accompanies him everywhere, from Madrid to Toledo, to Granada, to Valladolid, and to Burgos; he is thus able to send all the news which is known to the Court. The overwhelming disaster which has befallen Christendom in the defeat of Hungary by the Turks is of supreme interest to him, but he also writes about the continued intrigues for the freedom of the two young sons of Francis, and the kindness with which they are treated, especially by Queen Eléonore, the Emperor's sister. He is in frequent correspondence with the Pope's ambassadors in France, in England, and in Venice, and whatever else we may question, we can never doubt the sincerity and good faith with which he incessantly labours for peace.

But the Count makes grievous complaint that he is often so long without letters from Rome; and he is certainly justified when we learn that during all that eventful winter and spring before the sack of Rome, when so much was happening, and the German levies were advancing to join Bourbon, Castiglione received no dispatches whatever. We can only conclude that he was purposely kept in the dark, for as late as March, 1527, he writes to the Archbishop of Capua that a letter has arrived from the General of the Franciscans—sent on a special embassy from Charles to Clement—"showing great hopes of peace, and there is so much joy shown by the Emperor, the nobles, and all sorts of people, that I cannot express it." To the

very last he still expects and longs for the promised coming of the Pope to Spain, when secure peace will be made, and united Christendom will go forth to drive back the advancing infidels. He fears that his letters may not have been received, and explains that he often sends three copies—one by France, another by sea from Barcelona, and a third by way of England.

As late as March 25, 1527—when the invading host of barbarians was advancing southward and already beyond all control, had defied their leader Frundsberg, and driven the Imperial ambassador, Ferramosca, to flee for his life—then Castiglione writes from Valladolid: "We are buried here, without any news . . . that which does arrive is kept secret. . . . I have had no letters since last November. . . . I cannot tell you how anxious are the Prelates and the Grandees of this Imperial Court, that His Majesty should make peace with the Pope . . . and truly Italy, with all its calamities, cannot desire peace more than Spain."

Then came the crushing disaster of Rome, which destroyed at once and for ever all his hopes; every possibility of that conciliation for which he had laboured so long and so earnestly. He knew not who to trust or who to believe; he had long been in ill-health, and only his eager hope to serve his master had given him spirit for his work, so that when the blow fell, it is not too much to say that his heart was broken.

The loyal ambassador had fallen from favour, and evil tongues accused him of having concealed the Emperor's feelings and intentions; while even the Pope himself, on August 20, wrote him a bitter letter of reproach and blame. This was the last and most cruel

stroke of Fate; but the faithful minister was still, as it were, chained to his post, for Clement was in desperate need of a Legate to plead his cause with the Emperor, now lord and master of Italy. Neither Cardinal Farnese nor Cardinal Salviati had courage to accept the office, and the mission was given to Castiglione, who once more threw himself heart and soul into the Pope's cause. There were terrible difficulties in the way of any settlement, as Rome was still under military occupation of the unpaid mercenaries, Lannoy had died of the plague, and Clement refused to leave Rome, where his intrigues still fomented discord amongst the leaders. Cardinal Colonna did his utmost to help the negotiations, which were at last concluded on November 26, 1527; the Spanish garrison left the Castell St. Angelo, and a solemn Te Deum was sung in St. Peter's by the clergy of Rome. The Pope, who could keep no bargain, made his escape in disguise to Orvieto early in December.

It was after this event that Count Castiglione wrote his great letter of justification to Pope Clement VII on December 10, 1527, from Burgos. In many pages of eloquent pleading he replies with simple dignity to the charges brought against him, but maintains throughout his tone of loving reverence towards the Head of Christendom. His first impulse had been to accept in silent humility the chastisement of His Holiness, but every instinct of a gallant knight and gentleman protested against such unmerited condemnation, when his conscience told him that in truth he had deserved praise and reward. With calm deliberate clearness, he tells the whole story of his mission in Spain, an honour thrust upon him against his wish,

and only accepted with reluctant misgivings and in a pure spirit of self-sacrifice.

When he is accused of being deceived by the friendly language of the Emperor, he points out that "if the words of the General of the Franciscans, of Signor Ferramosca, and the letters of the Viceroy (Lannoy) deserved to be trusted, it is no wonder that I believed the words of the Emperor, spoken to me many times and with more emphasis than I can write." No doubt that in this case "the wish was father to the thought," as in the friendship between Rome and Spain, Castiglione saw the only hope of peace for Europe. It is also quite possible that the warm admiration and personal friendship of Charles for the Italian Legate may have tended to lull him into a false confidence, which would also have been encouraged by receiving no letters or instructions from the Pope during those long fatal months of approaching disaster. As for the question of truce with Bourbon, the news of it had not reached him until four months afterwards, when everyone else at the Court had received letters. For his part he had constantly written, usually "in duplicate, in triplicate, and sent by France, by the way of the merchants . . ." with all possible care. This most interesting and stately letter ends thus:

"As I behold Your Holiness, my only lord, and Vicar of Christ upon earth, support with high courage and patience so grave a calamity, not having deserved it, so should I endure without complaint this trouble, which compared with yours is small indeed; and yet it weighs more upon my weaker soul than does the greater burden upon the nobility and saintly strength of Your Holiness. And therefore I hope that this

greatness of soul, with Divine assistance, will so help Vostra Beatitudine, that you may conquer this stormy tempest of fortune, and that you may live many years with much glory and tranquillity, to the service of God and the benefit of humanity, as all your devoted servants desire, and I above all others. And humbly kissing your holy feet, I commend myself to your good grace.

"From Burgos, December 10, MDXXVII."

The loyal and faithful ambassador did not live to see the literal fulfilment of his prayers. He had gone to his rest before that settled peace, which he so earnestly desired, was secured on a firm basis when Charles attained his heart's desire, and was at last crowned with the Imperial Crown, on his thirtieth birthday, February 24, 1530, by the Pope at Bologna. There followed a time of comparative peace and prosperity for the ruined homes of Italy, and Clement continued his rule in the Chair of St. Peter, with at least outward tranquillity, under the protection of the Emperor, whose indomitable persistency had at length enabled him to achieve the gigantic task which he had undertaken.

It is quite possible, as various biographers of Count Baldassare Castiglione have suggested, that his final good offices on behalf of the Pope and his passionate undaunted appeal to the Emperor may have been successful at last. In any case, he soon had another opportunity of showing his devotion to the Pontiff. After the sack of Rome many faithful believers were full of indignation at the treatment which the Holy Father had received, and looked upon Charles as the cause of this fearful sacrilege. The Emperor's Latin

Secretary, Alfonso de Valdèz, came to his defence, with a dialogue between Lactantio, a young courtier, and a certain archdeacon, who meet at Valladolid and talk together of what has recently happened at Rome. In the first part, Lactantio vindicates the Emperor, and shows that he was in no way to blame, and in the second part, he asserts that God had permitted this catastrophe for the good of all Christianity, and as a just punishment for the corruption and worldly avidity of the Pope, the cardinals, and all the priests.

This Alfonso must not be confused with the far more distinguished Juan de Valdèz, his twin brother, a shining light of the Reformation. When the *Diálogo de Lactancio* was put forth, Castiglione at once accepted the challenge and came forward as champion of the Church and her rulers; but that such a controversy should be needful was very bitter to his orthodox spirit.

During the last year of his life, it was to his great literary work, the *Cortegiano*, that the exiled statesman turned for peace and refreshment. The conception of this wonderful book—the portrait of the ideal courtier, which in his own life he had sought to realise—dated back to those halcyon years at the Court of Urbino, which cast a radiance over his whole life. It was in 1508, when the death of Duke Guidobaldo first overshadowed the happiness of the past, that, as Castiglione himself tells us, he sketched "in a few days" the first outline of his masterpiece. He had but little leisure to continue it during his camp life in the troubled wars of Francesco Maria's succession, but when he went as ambassador of the Duke of Urbino to Rome in 1514, he appears to have devoted

himself seriously to his labour of love, in the midst of a congenial circle of friends—men of letters, poets, and artists. In this brilliant society, the splendid flower of the Italian Renaissance, Castiglione may well have been inspired to paint the warm life of his day, with the breadth of conception, the vivid insight, the exquisite fusion of the present with the literary and artistic elements of antiquity, which have given his work so priceless a value, so enduring a charm.

From internal evidence we find that the Fourth Book of the *Cortegiano* must have been written not later than the early spring of 1516. Here the death of his intimate friend, Cesare Gonzaga, which occurred in 1512, is mentioned. We are told that Ottaviano Fregoso had been made Doge of Genoa, an honour bestowed upon him in 1515, while Giuliano dei Medici is spoken of as Duke of Nemours, and still living. As he died in March, 1516, this fixes the date for us. But if the book was in a manner written by this time, it was very far from complete, as we find many alterations made in the original manuscript, both before and after it had been sent to Bembo, Sadoleto, Lodovico Canossa and other friends in 1518, to obtain their opinions and criticisms. As Pietro Bembo was one of the characters who is made to speak his mind in the conversations at Urbino, we are not surprised to find Castiglione writing to him that, "if you are not pleased with what I make you say, or the manner of saying it, then change it, cut out, or add to it as you please. . . . Mantua, October 20, MDXVIII."

Count Lodovico da Canossa, afterwards Bishop of Bajus, was another speaker in the *Cortegiano*, and he appears to have been entrusted with Bembo's letter of

criticism, and to have mislaid it, to the great disappointment of the author, who mentions this to his friend M. Pietro in a letter from Mantua, January, 1520. We only marvel that the precious manuscript itself was not lost, in days when the post was so insecure. But there were other dangers which arose from the very popularity of the work.

In the year 1524 the Marchesa Vittoria Colonna borrowed the precious manuscript, which Castiglione asked her to return to him before he set out on his mission to Spain. The lady was most unwilling to do so, as she was so delighted with it that she wished to read it again and again until she could remember it. She adds: "It would not be fitting that I should tell you what I think of it, for the same reason that your lordship says you cannot speak of the excellence of the Signora Duchessa [because not only his words could not express it, but his mind could not imagine it]. . . . I will simply tell you the plain truth . . . that I have never seen, nor expect to see, another work . . . to be compared to this. Because, besides the new and beautiful subject, such is the excellence of the style that, with a sweetness unknown before, it leads you to a charming and beautiful mountain, ever ascending . . . and the way is so beautiful . . . both by art and nature." Then she goes on to speak of "the wonderful wit, the wise sayings which shine upon us like gems held together by a slender thread of gold which takes away none of their light."

Before returning the *Cortegiano*, Vittoria Colonna, the great lady who was accustomed to having her own way, saw no harm in having a copy privately made. This she probably meant to keep for herself, but

could not resist the temptation of sharing her literary treasure with various friends, who naturally showed an equal lack of discretion.

This explains the reproachful letter which Castiglione wrote to the Marchesa from Burgos, September 21, 1527:

". . . The Marchese del Vasto showed me a letter of Vostra Signoria in which you owned the theft of the *Cortegiano* . . . and I have heard that many fragments of my poor book were in Naples, and had been seen in the hands of many people, who, having in this way made them public, said that they had received them from V. S. Pity me a little, as a father who sees his child ill-treated . . . and if it were of little worth . . . yet thus it is deprived of its chief value, that of novelty. . . ."

Then "in a fine vein of courteous irony" he continues:

"Yet I remain indebted to you, as the necessity of having the book printed at once has relieved me from the trouble of adding many things to it which I had in my mind, of small account like the rest; and thus weariness will be saved to the reader, and blame to the author. . . ."

Thus it came about that the *Cortegiano* was at last printed in folio in Venice, with this title:

*Il Cortegiano del Comte Baldesar Castiglione. . . . In Venezia nelle case di Aldo Romano di Andrea d'Asola suo suocero nell' anno MDXXVIII del mese di Aprile.*

It was published with an epistle of dedication to Signor Don Michel de Silva, Bishop of Viseo, in which the author relates how, after the death of Duke Guido-

baldo, he continued in the service of his successor, Duke Franceso Della Rovere. While the memory of the Duke's virtues was fresh in his mind, and also the great delight which he had taken during those years in the beloved company at the Court of Urbino . . . whose memory induced him to write this *Book of the Courtier.* But fortune for so many years had held him in such continual labours, that he had never found leisure to bring it to an end in a manner to please his judgment. Then he tells the story of the copy made by the Marchesa Colonna, and how finding that the book was in the hands of many in Naples, and fearing that it might be printed, he determined to correct and publish it at once himself.

When he began to read it afresh, he was grieved to remember how many of those spoken of were dead. "Thus Messer Alfonso Ariosto, to whom the book was first dedicated, himself is dead, a noble youth, discreet, full of gentle ways, and all things suitable for a courtier." Alfonso was the son of Bonifazio and second cousin to the poet Lodovico Ariosto. He was an intimate friend of Castiglione and his family, a man of letters and a brave soldier, who fought in the famous battle of December, 1509, when Alfonso d'Este defeated the Venetians and his triumph was sung in the *Orlando Furioso* (c. xl. 4).

The espistle of dedication thus continues: "Likewise the Duke Giuliano de' Medici is dead, whose goodness and noble courtesy deserved to have been longer enjoyed by the world. As for Messer Bernardo, Cardinal of Santa Maria in Portico, who by his acute and pleasant ready wit was delightful to all who knew him, he also is dead. Dead too is il Signor Ottaviano

Fregoso"—(who became Doge of Genoa, and whose eulogy has been already quoted at the time of the disastrous sack of Genoa in 1521). "Dead also are many others who are spoken of in this book, unto whom it would have seemed that nature promised a long life. But that which may not be told without tears is that the Signora Duchessa is also dead; and if my mind is troubled by the loss of so many friends and noble lords of mine, who have left me in this life as in a wilderness full of sorrow, all the more bitterly do I feel grief for the death of the Signora Duchessa, as she was much more precious to me than all the others, and I was more indebted to her. . . ."

The Duchess Elisabetta died on January 28, 1526, when Castiglione was far away in Spain, and the Signora Emilia Pia, his faithful and devoted friend, died in May, 1528, finding solace on her death-bed in repeating some of the noble passages of the *Cortegiano*.

Thus one by one the links with his bygone happy life were severed. We cannot believe that his stay of long years at the Court of Charles V was other than a weary exile, always full of anxiety with regard to political matters, and of eager longing for his home at Mantua. He suffered much from ill-health, and was no longer surrounded, as in Urbino and Rome, with brilliant congenial friends, whose intercourse was the very joy of life to a man of his high intellectual tastes. Yet he was greatly esteemed and admired by many of the Spanish nobles, and above all by the Emperor, who as a proof of his appreciation is said to have offered him the Bishopric of Avila. Some of his biographers suggest that he accepted it, but the annals of Avila show that the See was vacant from the death of Francesco

*Hanfstaengl, Photo* *Titian*

EMPEROR CHARLES V

To face p. 192

Ruiz in 1528 to the election of the Canon Rodericus Sanchez de Mercado in 1530.

After his great work, the *Cortegiano*, had actually left his hands to be published in Venice in April, 1528, and there was a lull in his diplomatic labours, the thoughts of Castiglione turned more than ever to his three young children, growing up afar from him under the care of his aged mother. The brief years of his happy married life were now but a sad memory of the past, but little Camillo and his sisters were doubly dear to the exile, both for their own sake and that of their dearly loved mother. A most interesting and touching Latin letter to them from their father has been preserved, written seven months before his death. So earnest and solemn is the tone in which Count Castiglione addresses each child in turn, with precept and rules to guide the coming years, that we are almost tempted to think he must have had a premonition of his approaching fate. The following epistle, stately and sonorous in the original Latin, has all the pathetic dignity of a last will and testament :—

"To Camillo, and Anna, and Ippolito.

"My dearest Children,

"I am persuaded, my dearest son Camillo, that you desire above all things my return home, for Nature and Law would have us reverence our parents next to God. And in your case there may be a special duty, since I am content with one son, and have no wish for another to share with you my fatherly affection and my estates. I will own that I have no misgivings with regard to you, which might lead me to repent of such a resolve; yet I would have you know that I look for

such duty from you rather as a debt than with the indifference of most parents. This you will easily repay if you regard the excellent tutor chosen by your friends as taking the place of a parent, and if you will dutifully follow his advice. On account of my prolonged absence, I have no further counsel to give you beyond this line of Virgil, which I may quote without undue pride:

> Disce puer, virtutem ex me, verumque laborem;
> Fortunam ex aliis.
>
> (From me, my son, learn worth and honest toil;
> Fortune from others take.)

You, my Anna, who first made me love the name of daughter, do you so adorn yourself with graces of the mind, that whatever beauty of person you may develop it shall be only the handmaid of your virtues, and shall be last in importance amongst the praises you receive.

"And you, my Ippolita, think upon my love for her whose name you bear, and how beautiful it would be for your goodness to surpass your sister's as much as her years do yours. Continue both as you have begun, and having lost your mother before you could know her, do you so imitate her virtues that all may say how like you are to her.

"Farewell. Monzoni, tertio Id. Julii. MDXXVIII.

"PATER BALTHASSAR CASTILION."

Concerning the abiding devotion of Castiglione's life, his love for his mother, we have no record during these last years of gloom and exile. We know not whether he laid bare his troubled heart to the influence of her tender sympathy, or whether, with a sterner

courage, he only let her see the smooth surface of his courtly life, ever high in the esteem and honour of the Emperor, and did not reveal to her the depths of agony and despair which had overwhelmed him on hearing of the sack of Rome.

In these days, when so many long-lost and forgotten archives are discovered, it may be our good fortune to meet with the letters which Madonna Aloisia received from her illustrious son during his Spanish embassy, and which would be of such surpassing interest. But this we know, that, brave and faithful to the last, Castiglione never relaxed his efforts for peace and reconciliation between the Pope and the Emperor, and his friends believe that the coming alliance between these princes, which the Count did not live to see, was in no small degree prepared by his unwearied labours. The earthly pilgrimage of the great Courtier was nearly at an end. During his stay in Spain, he had suffered much from ill-health, which in this last year was aggravated by mental trouble, so that when he had a more serious attack at Toledo, early in 1529, he had no strength to rally, and died in a few days, on February 7th. He was deeply lamented by his many friends, and Charles V is said to have been much affected by the news, exclaiming to his courtiers: "Yo vos digo que es muerto uno de los mejores caballeros del mundo" (I tell you that one of the finest gentlemen in the world is dead). He ordered a splendid funeral in the church of Sant' Elifonso for his friend, whose *Cortegiano* remained one of his favourite books to the end of his life.

Pope Clement VII was not slow to recognise the loss he had sustained in the death of his faithful and

devoted Nuncio, and wrote two letters of condolence to his mother, Madonna Aloisia Castiglione, at Mantua, in which he freely expressed his love and gratitude to the friend who had served him with such fidelity and devotion. The Mantuan ambassador at the Court of Rome, Francesco Gonzaga, also wrote to her, saying: "His Holiness is greatly troubled by this misfortune, knowing how great is the loss of his faithful and honoured service, and at this time nothing more disastrous could have occurred."

A few months later the bereaved mother expressed a wish that the Count's remains should be brought to his native place and rest in the pilgrimage church of Santa Maria delle Grazie, near the ancestral home of the Castiglione family at Casatico, and a few miles to the west of Mantua. Here a noble monument of red marble was placed from the design of his friend, Giulio Romano, a last tribute of his love and admiration. Upon the left column was engraved a long and somewhat pompous Latin epitaph by Bembo, while on the right are written the lines composed by Castiglione on the death of his wife Ippolita, who rests by his side. (She is supposed to speak.)

NON EGO NUNC VIVO CONIUX
DULCISSIMA : VITAM
CORPORE NAMQUE TUO FATA
MEAM ABSTULERUNT :
SED VIVAM, TUMULO CUM TECUM
CONDAR IN ISTO,
IUNGENTURQUE TUIS OSSIBUS
OSSA MEA

(No more am I a happy wife with her loving husband, for Fate has parted me from thy side, but I shall live

again when I am hidden with thee in that tomb where thy bones will be with mine.)

On the grief of Castiglione's mother we will not dwell; it is too deep and sacred for human touch, and is shrouded from the world without. The light of her life, the joy of her heart, the desire of her eyes was untimely taken from her; but there still remained a precious charge of loving duty to her son's orphan children. They seem to have been worthy of her affection and of their noble name, and as we trace their fortunes in the days to come, we see that the ardent hopes of their father's touching farewell were fulfilled in their future life. Of the boy Camillo, born in 1517, we are told that as he grew to man's estate, in him was his father's dream realised in no small degree, and he became that mirror of knightly courtesy, distinguished in court and camp—a meet representative of the ideal and perfect courtier. The young Count made a famous name for himself, fighting in the army of Ferrante Gonzaga in the service of the Duke of Mantua. Although he applied in vain for his father's lost Castello of Nuvillaria, he appears to have led a fortunate and distinguished life; he became Marchesato of Monferrato, and lived in his later years until 1598, in his grand old feudal city of Casale-Monferrato (between Vercelli and Alessandria).

Anna, the elder daughter, married first Conte Alessandro d'Aro, and, secondly, Antonio Ippoliti, Conte di Gazzuolo. Ippolita, the youngest, who was only eight years old at her father's death, married Ercole Turchi, belonging to a noble family of Ferrara.

Before we devote ourselves to the *Cortegiano*, Castiglione's masterpiece, it will be well to make a brief

allusion to his other literary works. We have already quoted from many of his letters, which were greatly admired in his time not only for their style and eloquence, their wit and learning, but for the generous nature which they revealed. One famous Latin letter of his was addressed to Henry VIII of England, beginning "Vellem sacratissime Rex" . . . and is a long and enthusiastic panegyric of his lord, Guidobaldo Duke of Urbino, written soon after the death of this prince.[1] Baldassare Castiglione was also a poet of high repute in his day, as we see from the warm praise of his friends, Paolo Giovio, Pietro Bembo, Bibbiena, Ariosto, and many others. A great number of "Testimonianze" to his fame as a poet were collected by the Abáte Serassi, and speak of his work in the most glowing terms, ending thus :—

> Orator, Vates, & Miles & Aulicus, omni est
> Egregie functus munere CASTALIO.

We find the Count compared to Virgil, in his more ambitious efforts, to Catullus and Tibullus in his shorter Latin pieces, and to Petrarch in his Italian poems.

In Castiglione's life at Urbino we have already had occasion to allude to his Eclogue, "Tirsi," written jointly with Cesare Gonzaga, and performed during one Carnival at the Court of Guidobaldo. A beautiful Latin elegy to the beloved memory of his friend Falcone of Mantua, under the title of "Alcon," reminds us of Lycidas in its tone and classical atmosphere. "Cleopatra," which his admirers speak of as being in the "heroic style," and other Latin poems, bring in various allusions to the Popes Julius and Leo,

[1] Printed at Fossombrone, 1513.

and these, with his Canzoni and Sonnets in Italian, were the delight of the cultured Court of Leo X. We will conclude with one example:

SONETTO VI.

Superbi colli, e voi sacre ruine,
Che 'l nome sol di Roma ancor tenete,
Ahi che reliquie miserande avete,
Di tant' anime eccelse e pellegrine!
Colossi, archi, teatri, opre divine,
Trionfal pompe gloriose e liete,
In poco cener pur converse siete,
E fatte al vulgo vil favola al fine,
Così, se ben un tempo al tempo guerra
Fanno l' opre famose, a passo lento
E l' opre e i nomi il tempo invido atterra:
Vivrò dunque fra 'miei martir contento;
Che se 'l tempo dà fine a ciò ch' è in terra,
Darà forse ancor fine al mio tormento.

# THE BOOK OF THE COURTIER

## FROM THE ITALIAN OF COUNT BALDASSARE CASTIGLIONE

THE story of Castiglione's life may well serve as the most fitting introduction to his masterpiece, the *Cortegiano*, in many ways the most representative book of the Italian Renaissance. It was acknowledged as such, and received with delight when it was first given to the world, in folio, at Venice, in 1528; and at once "began its rapid conquest of Italy and Europe." As we are no longer so familiar with this fascinating work as were our ancestors in Tudor days, it may be well to allude to a few of the critical appreciations of the past.

The *Book of the Courtier*, which was practically finished in the same year, 1516, as More's *Utopia* and Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*, was in 1538 translated into French by Monsieur Jacques Colin, secretary to Francis I; in 1540 was given in Spanish by Senor Juan Bosca, while the first English translation was that of Sir Thomas Hoby, published in 1561, which still stands supreme in charm and interest. It was dedicated, by a happy instinct, to Lord Henry Hastings, grandson of the noble lord who had been sent to meet and entertain Count Castiglione when he came to England in the reign of Henry VII to receive the Order of the Garter for the Duke of Urbino.

In the courtly atmosphere of the Elizabethan age the *Cortegiano* was an immediate success, and there are

few writers of that period who do not borrow from it a thought or an illustration. Some earlier scholars, such as Thomas Cromwell, had already read it in the "Ytalian tonge," as Bonner calls it when he borrows the book in 1530.

The ideal Courtier—the chivalrous knight, the scholar-gentleman—of Castiglione became a model on which the noblest minds sought to fashion themselves and others. We may hold Sir Philip Sidney to have attained this perfection, and Milton writes: "I call therefore a complete and generous education that which fits a man to perform justly, skilfully, and magnanimously all the offices, both private and public, of peace and war." Roger Ascham, in *The Scholemaster* (1570), takes much the same view of the pupil's requirements. It is curious to find Spenser telling us that the aim of his "Faerie Queen" was "to fashion a gentleman or noble person in vertuous and gentle discipline," by showing how the twelve moral virtues of Aristotle are set forth in the lives of twelve knights. Other critics have already pointed out how much Spenser drew from the Platonic orations in the *Cortegiano* when he wrote his hymns "Of Heavenly Love" and "Heavenly Beautie." In later days, Shelley followed the same influence when he wrote his "Hymn to Intellectual Beauty."

Amongst other allusions to the *Book of the Courtier*, in Florio's *Second Frutes* (1591), *Castilion's Courtier* is mentioned as one of the books to be read by those who desire to learn Italian. Guilpin, in his *Skialethea* (1598), remarks:

> Come to the court, and Balthazar affords
> Fountains of holy and rose-water words.

Ben Jonson plainly tells his readers that they would

give life and brightness to their style by making use of "pretty sayings, similitudes, conceits, and the like, such as are in *The Courtier* and the 2d. book of Cicero, *De Oratore*." There was scarcely need to give this advice, as the best stories told in the *Cortegiano* are repeated in many versions by various writers, and we may even fancy that the porter in *Macbeth* was thinking of Castiglione's miserly farmer when he said: "Here's a farmer that hanged himself on th' expectation of plenty. . . ." The advice of Polonius to his son closely resembles that of the Courtier with regard to dress, and we trace various reminiscences in Marlowe, while Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy* has many borrowed passages.

The dramatic form of the *Cortegiano* was very popular in Renaissance days, as we see in the *Decameron* of Boccaccio, the *Canterbury Tales* of Chaucer, and the *Heptameron* of Marguerite of Navarre. The idea was taken from classical writers such as Plato, Cicero, and Lucian. Another treatise of instruction called *Il Galateo*, written by a certain bishop, Giovanni della Casa, about 1550, was of quite a different nature, and was the forerunner of those numerous Books of Courtesy, extending down to *Sandford and Merton*, which have been well described as masterpieces of trite instruction. Amongst these later moralists, the Machiavellis of the home, we may mention the *Compleat Gentleman* (1622) of Henry Peacham, an "amiable and travelled pedagogue," who wrote for the period of the Restoration; *The English Gentleman* of Richard Braithwaite, who embodied the Puritan ideal, and copied his selection of jests in the most barefaced way from the *Cortegiano*. Then follow Sir George

Savile, Sir Matthew Hale, Sir Walter Raleigh, who wrote directions for his son, and Lord Burleigh, who says: "Be sure to keep some great man for thy friend, but trouble him not for trifles"; and again he urges: "Suffer not thy sons to pass the Alps, for they shall learn there but pride, blasphemy, and other sins. . . ." Francis Osborn adds another note to this advice: "lest your sons, together with gold, return apes and peacocks." Then we have *Adam Petrie's Rules* (1712), with his smug servility in the awful presence of the "Person of Quality," and we come down to the days of Lord Chesterfield, whose pages show us how the Courtier of the Renaissance has dwindled down to the "Man of Fashion" of the reign of George II.

Yet these Books of Courtesy are most valuable documents for the History of Manners, while at the same time they show us that the old will instruct, and the young will neglect instruction, until the end of time. But the *Cortegiano* of Baldassare Castiglione stands on a far higher plane. It has been welcomed with such a chorus of praise in all lands, and from men of such different views, that it is only possible to give a small selection of remarks most worthy of note. Thus, to begin with the chivalrous and courtly poet Torquato Tasso, he writes:

"While Courts shall last, while Princes shall endure, and ladies and knights shall meet together, while valour and courtesy shall have an abode in our souls, the name of Castiglione shall remain precious to us" (*Dialogo della Corte*).

Thomas Sackville says[1] "in commendation of the worke" (after speaking of kings' palaces):—

[1] Quoted by Walter Raleigh.

A rarer work and richer far in worth
Castilio's hand presenteth here to the,
No proud ne golden Court doth he set furth
But what in Court a Courtier ought to be.
The Prince he raiseth houge and mightie walles,
Castilio frames a wight of noble fame:
The Kinge with gorgeous Tyssue claddes his halles,
The Count with golden vertue deckes the same. . . ."

Ascham praises it thus: "To join learning with comely exercises, Conte Baldesar Castiglione, in his book *Cortegiano,* doth trimly teach; which book advisedly read and diligently followed but one year at home in England, would do a young gentleman more good, I wiss, than three years' travel abroad spent in Italy. . . ."

Dr. Johnson gives his opinion: ". . . The best book that ever was written upon good breeding, *Il Cortegiano,* by Castiglione, grew up at the little Court of Urbino, and you should read it."

And to prove to us that the splendid ideal of such a Perfect Courtier is not out of date in our own time, Addington Symonds remarks that "with slight and immaterial differences, the *Cortegiano* is a modern Gentleman, such as all men of education at the present day would wish to be."

This view is emphasised in the delightful and scholarly Introduction of Walter Raleigh to the Tudor translation of Sir Thomas Hoby: "The many-sided ideal has always been strong in England. . . . Our proudest title is . . . that we too are men of the Renaissance, inheritors of that large and noble conception of humanity and art to which a monument is erected in this *Book of the Courtier.*"

I venture to offer the following sketch and literary

study of that most fascinating book, in the hope that a dim foretaste of its beauties may send my readers to the original Italian, for when all is said and done, there remains much truth in the old proverb: "Tradutori, traditori."

## THE BOOK OF THE COURTIER.[1]

AN EPITOME, WITH ANNOTATIONS.

*Place* . . . *The Palace of Urbino.*
*Time* . . . . . *March, 1507.*

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

Madonna Elisabetta Gonzaga, Duchess of Urbino. The wife of Duke Guidobaldo, and sister of Francesco Marchese of Mantua. Age about 46.

Madonna Emilia Pia. Sister of Giberto Pio, Lord of Carpi, and widow of Antonio, Count of Montefeltro, half-brother of Duke Guidobaldo. Intimate friend and constant companion of the Duchess.

Margherita Gonzaga. Young niece of the Duchess (illeg. daughter of Marchese Francesco).

Costanza Fregosa. Young half-niece of Duke Guidobaldo.

Francesco Maria della Rovere. Son of Giovanni della Rovere and Giovanna sister of Duke Guidobaldo. Afterwards Duke of Urbino and Prefect of Rome, by a Brief of Julius II. Age 17.

Federico Fregoso. Brother of Costanza. Later Archbishop of Salerno, and Cardinal. Age 27.

[1] Much condensed, as the original consists of about 140,000 words.

Ottaviano Fregoso. Brother of Costanza and Federico. Afterwards a distinguished general and Doge of Genoa.

Giuliano dei Medici. "Il Magnifico." Third son of Lorenzo dei Medici, and brother of Leo X. Afterwards Duke of Nemours. Age 29.

Pietro Bembo. Distinguished writer and poet. Afterwards Papal Secretary to Leo X, and Cardinal. Age 37.

Bernardo Dovisi, usually known as Bibbiena, or later as Cardinal of Sta. Maria in Portico. Man of letters and friend of Raphael. A devoted adherent of the Medici. Age 37.

Bernardo Accolti, usually known as Unico Aretino. Popular *Improvisatore*. Brother of Cardinal Pietro Accolti. Age about 42.

Gaspar Pallavicino. Of the noble family of Cortemaggiore. Usually takes the side against women in the colloquies. Age 21.

Cesare Gonzaga. A cousin and most intimate friend and companion of Castiglione. Age about 32.

Giovan Cristoforo Romano. The famous sculptor and medallist, at home in all the Courts of Italy. Age about 42.

Lodovico Canossa. Count of a noble Veronese family, became later Bishop of Tricarico, and also Bishop of Bayeux. Age 32.

Collo Vincenzo Calmeta. Formerly Secretary to Beatrice, Duchess of Milan. Poet and writer of no great distinction.

Sigismondo Morello da Ortona. Almost the only elderly Courtier, "a Nestor of the Renaissance," at the young and lively Court of Urbino. Cas-

tiglione speaks of him with high honour in the *Tirsi*.

Lodovico Pio. Of the noble family of the Lords of Carpi, and a young kinsman of Emilia Pia. A brave captain in the service of Il Moro and Pope Julius.

Roberto da Bari. A gentleman of the Court of Urbino, and a valued friend of Castiglione.

Pietro da Napoli. Of whom little appears to be known for certain.

Febus di Ceva. Of an illustrous family in Piedmont, but he fell into evil repute later for an act of violence.

Niccolò Frisio. A friend of Isabella d'Este and Bembo.

Fra Serafino. A noted jester, who was a good singer and actor, and in high esteem with the Este and Gonzaga princes.

## Book I

*The Count of Urbino and the passing of Pope Julius—Concerning the Perfect Courtier—All the qualities needful for his perfection.*

Let us renew a happy memory and tell once more the converse held by our most excellent company in times past at the Court. . . .

Well known to all men is the little city of Urbino, on the slope of the Apennines, in the midst of Italy towards the Gulf of Venice. . . . For its great felicity, it has long been governed by good princes . . . such as the Duke Federico of glorious memory, who in his days was the light of Italy, famous for his wisdom, courtesy,

justice, liberality, and invincible courage. Amongst other praiseworthy deeds, in the "hard and sharp" situation of Urbino, he built a palace, the fairest in all Italy . . . adorned with all beautiful things; vessels of silver, hangings of silk and cloth of gold, with antique statues of marble and bronze, wonderful pictures and musical instruments of every kind, and all that was most rare and excellent. To this was added a splendid library of precious books in Greek and Latin and Hebrew, all adorned with gold and silver; and this he esteemed the supreme ornament of his great palace.

At the age of lxv years, the Duke died with glory as he had lived, and was succeeded by his son Guidobaldo, a child of ten, who became the heir of all his father's virtues. He distinguished himself when he came to man's estate, in many wars (of which the story has been already told). And although he fell into ill-health himself, yet did he encourage at his Court, all chivalrous sports, and honourable and pleasant pastimes for the mind and body. It was his custom, by reason of his infirmity, to go to his rest soon after supper, and then the courtly company gathered together where the Duchess was wont to be, the Lady Elisabetta Gonzaga. With her was ever the Lady Emilia Pia, who was dowered with so much spirit and judgment, that she seemed the mistress of the company, and leader of the stately revels. Thus with pleasant colloquies and merry conceits, this house might well be called the home of mirth and joy, but such was the love and reverence which we bore to the Duchess, that her presence set bounds to our mirth and checked discord, for we valued our

liberty only so far as we might please our gracious Lady. Her virtues are so well known too that my tongue or pen would fall far short in describing them. . . .

When the company was assembled after supper, at times there would be music or dancing, or certain witty sports or pastimes, or debating and learned conversations. And this was the order in which they sat: in a circle, with first a man and then a lady, until only men remained, of whom there was a far greater number.

On the day after Pope Julius had departed, having paid a visit to the Court of Urbino, six of the assembled company, after much pleasant talk, were requested by Madonna Emilia to choose each a subject of discourse. First M. Gaspar Pallavicino suggested that every one should declare what virtue the person beloved should be endowed with.

Then M. Cesare Gonzaga asserted that there was some folly in each member of the company, who should confess his weakness, and so by the help of others save his soul.

Fra Serafino, in his jesting way, asked why women have such fear of rats, but was reproved by the Lady Emilia for his frivolity.

M. Unico Aretino desired that every man should attempt to discover the meaning of the letter S, a device in jewels, which the Duchess wore upon her forehead. As no one could answer, he made an impromptu Sonnet on the subject, which was much admired. It ends thus:

> Questa S dimostra con non poco ingegno
> Un sol solo in bellezza e'n crudeltate.

M. Ottaviano Fregoso requested that each one should show a reason in himself for the lady he loved to disdain him.

M. Pietro Bembo inquired which is the greater misfortune, to displease the one beloved, or that the loved one should displease us?

But the Lady Emilia was not satisfied with any of these subjects, and turned to Messer Federico Fregoso, who at once proposed in that courtly assembly, that nothing would be more appropriate than the description of all the qualities pertaining to the Perfect Courtier. To this, the Duchess and the Lady Emilia at once agreed, Lodovico, Count of Canossa, being chosen to speak first, as being so good a Courtier himself.

Then answered the Count, with much modesty, that it was a hard matter to know true perfection: ". . . I would have our Courtier nobly born and of a distinguished family, for he will be unwilling to turn aside from the way of his ancestors, good birth being like unto a clear lamp, which shows light upon all actions and encourages virtue. We find in arms and other matters that the most famous men are usually well-born. Take, for example, the breed of horses and other animals, likewise with trees and plants, whose seeds and cuttings follow the stock they came from. And the same is true with men, if they are brought up in good nurture they will resemble those they came from, and indeed often surpass them. It is true that, whether by favour of the stars or of Nature, some are born with such marvellous grace, adorned with every blessing of mind and body, that we can only look upon them as some divine and rare

product, needing but little culture to attain full perfection." Of this happy birth, the Lord Ippolito da Este, Cardinal of Ferrara, is given as an instance. "The Courtier, besides noble birth, should be fortunate not alone in quick intelligence, but also in beauty of face and person, and with a certain grace and charm which shall make him acceptable at first sight unto all who look upon him."

Hereupon, the Lord Gaspar Pallavicino replied at once: "According to the rules of our pastime, I will deny that this high birth is needful to the Courtier. And I could tell you of many born of the noblest families who have been full of vice; and again of others, lowly in origin, who have made their posterity famous. And if your argument were true, we should all be alike, being descended from one seed. This inborn perfection of body and mind may chance to the man of low degree as well as to the highest born, and surely he should be able to attain to the highest perfection of the Courtier."

Then Count Lodovico: "I do not deny that this is possible, but if a man be born noble, the world will at once hold him in esteem, while he that is not a Gentleman will have by much labour and long time, to create a good opinion of himself. This gives a great advantage to the noble, for we are apt to judge more by feeling than fact and to retain our first opinion. Thus if we watch a game or contest, we often desire one side to win without any real cause.

"Regarding the Courtier, I would have him above all things to be distinguished by his feats of arms, and to be noted for his courage and fidelity towards the Lord he serves. But the truly brave man is modest and

avoids all ostentation (*fare il bravo*). For if he be as Berto shows us (a famous buffoon, who acted the bragging coward and the surly bravo), then he deserves what a noble Lady said to one such. She kindly asked him to dance with her, offered him music and other entertainments, but he grimly refused, declaring that such trifles were not his profession. She asked him, 'What, then, is your profession?' He answered with a frown, 'To fight.' Then the lady replied, 'Seeing that you are not now at war, I think you had better be well oiled and set up in an armoury until you are required, lest you become rustier than you already are.'"[1]

The Lord Gaspar remarked that if a man knew himself to be most excellent, it was not bragging to praise himself.

Count Lodovico owned that great men often showed their good opinion of themselves. Thus he who undertook great enterprises, like Alexander, must have great boldness and confidence in himself. When he heard a philosopher (Anaxagoras) say that there were many worlds, he wept, and gave as his reason that he had not yet conquered one; meaning that he desired to have them all.

Here M. Bibbiena interposed: "I remember you said that the Courtier should be handsome in face and person. Now I believe that I have this grace and beauty of face, as I have ever been much admired; but for comeliness of person I should wish to know clearly wherein it consists . . .?"

The company smiled at this remark, for the gentleman was well known to be very vain of his good looks.

[1] Tradition says that the lady was Catarina Sforza.

He was not only called "il bel Bernardo," but even spoke of himself by that name in a letter to Castiglione.

Count Lodovico made a courteous reply, in which he paid homage to M. Bibbiena's beauty of face and expression, it being manly and not too delicate. As to a man's figure, he should be neither too tall nor too short, of a good shape with well-proportioned limbs, showing strength, lightness, and quickness in all his movements. The Courtier should be trained to the skilful and ready use of all weapons, both of foot and horseman. He should be a thorough adept at wrestling, not rash in seeking quarrels, but resolute in the combat when it was calmly resolved upon. . . .

I would have our Courtier also a perfect horseman in any kind of saddle, knowing all that concerns horses. He should surpass every man in that which he is most skilled in. Amongst Italians he should be first in riding rough horses, in riding at the ring and the tilt, while in tournaments he should rival the best Frenchmen. At the game "a canne" [played on horseback, something like polo, with a reed instead of a ball], facing the bull, casting of darts and spears, he should equal the Spanish. But of all pastimes hunting is the best from its likeness to war, and is especially suited to the Courtier. He should also be skilled in swimming, leaping, running, and casting the stone. The game of palla [somewhat like our tennis] is a fine exercise for those living at Court, as it teaches quickness and nimbleness of body. . . ."

M. Cesare Gonzaga, having received a sign from the Lady Emilia, said, after a while: "You have said, Signor Lodovico, that the Courtier should do all with a certain grace, and this I most truly believe, for he

that hath grace findeth grace. But you say this is the gift of heaven, and do not tell us if it can be learnt by any labour or diligence. . . ."

M. Lodovico replied: "I can show you what a Perfect Courtier ought to be, but I cannot teach you how to become one. There is a proverb that grace is not to be learned, yet a good and watchful scholar may gather much from his teachers. Take, for example, Messer Galeazzo Sanseverino, who has ever had before his eyes the most perfect masters in every kind of sport and exercise, and from each one has chosen that in which he excels. But the special danger, and great thing to avoid, is any form of affectation; or again, the appearance of strain or difficulty in the doing of any action. In all that he does the Courtier must always cover his art by a certain *sprezzatura*. [Spontaneous grace. This word has been rendered in many ways, by nonchalence, by recklessness. Herrick says "wild civility" for the same idea. La Fontaine writes: "Ne forçons point notre talent, Nous ne ferions rien avec grâce."] In the most wonderful feats we must show no appearance of fatigue, and scarcely seem to give the matter a thought. To appear natural is often the highest art. I have heard that some ancient Orators would hide their knowledge and learning, and speak most simply as though nature led them, rather than study and art.

"Yet in all matters it is most important that this *sprezzatura* [spontaneity] should be real and not affected, as this would be the worst vice of all."

Then spoke Il Signor Magnifico Giuliano, pointing out how in music all stiffness and affectation was to be avoided. The continuance of a most perfect tune might

become irksome without the occasional discord which produces a curious harmony.

Count Lodovico remarked that too much carefulness in painting also may defeat its object; thus Apelles said that Protogenes knew not when he had worked enough at a picture, and should leave well alone.

"*Sprezzatura* [spontaneity] is indeed the fountain from which all grace springs. Often some slight gesture or movement, such as the way a man takes his weapon in hand, or makes a step in dancing, or trills out a tune in singing, is so easy and attractive that he gains credit for being even more accomplished than he is indeed. In the same way in painting, one careless line, one slight pencil sketch shows at once the skill and knowledge of the artist. And the same happens in all things."

Then followed some discourse about language, ancient Tuscan words, how any assumption of knowledge should be avoided; that different cities in Italy have various dialects, but that if the Courtier wish for a safe guide to follow, he should take Petrarch or Boccaccio. Language changes from time to time, and it is well to avoid too much use of ancient words. Examples taken from the classical writers. With regard alike to writing and speaking, the great thing for a Courtier is to have knowledge; for he who has not a clear understanding of the matter, and knows not exactly what he means, cannot express it. In speaking, many things are needful which are not required in writing, such as a good voice, not too low and soft like that of a woman, nor yet too austere and rough like that of a rustic, but sonorous, clear, sweet, and with a good pronunciation, and with suitable manner and gestures.

But all this is of small account if the speech itself is not witty, subtle, eloquent, or serious, according to the subject.

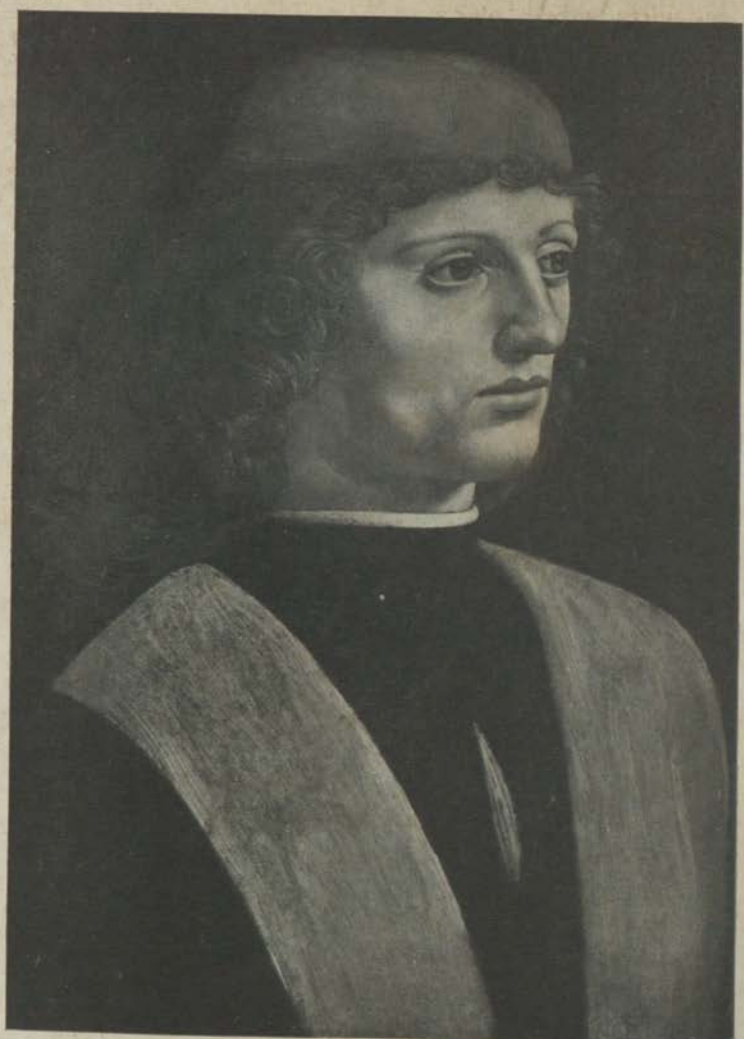
Signor Morello suggested that if the Courtier had such excellent speech, some might not understand him.

But the Count rejoined that all would understand him, for his language would be simple and to the point. "He shall know when to speak with dignity and vehemence and stir the minds of men, and when to use simplicity and gentleness, and make his words most sweet and tender." Then follows a long dissertation on language and eloquence, in which various members of the company join, until at length the Lady Emilia interrupts this digression, and laughingly desires the Count to return to the broken thread of the Courtier.

"Signora," replied Count Lodovico, "I think we said that affectation spoils all things, while simplicity and *sprezzatura* [spontaneity] give the charm of grace. In proof of this, I would point out how all women desire to be, or at least to appear beautiful, and if nature have not done her part, they endeavour themselves to supply it with art."

At this the Lady Costanza Fregosa laughed and said: "You would do much better to continue your discourse on grace and the Courtier, than to point out the faults of women without cause."

"Nay, but there is cause," answered the Count, "for this over-anxiety to be beautiful deprives you of grace." He then describes with great earnestness the charm of natural beauty in woman, of delicate order and simplicity in dress, and incidentally shows



*Anderson, Photo* *Ambrogio de Predis*

GALEAZZO DI SANSEVERINO

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us how very artificial, painted, and "trimmed" they usually were in those days. Thus, high foreheads being the fashion, it was the custom to increase the height by pulling out the hair, and other devices were in use.

The Count Lodovico then returns to his subject, and dwells lovingly on the various kinds of knowledge desirable for the Courtier. He tells of ancient heroes who combined a love of letters with prowess in arms. "Thus Alexander had such reverence for Homer, that he was said to keep the *Iliad* always at the head of his bed, and also studied Philosophy under Aristotle. Under the instruction of Socrates, Alcibiades added letters to his other advantages. The works which Cæsar has so divinely written bear witness to his love of study. It is said that Scipio Africanus was ever seen with the books of Xenophon in his hand. I could speak of Lucullus, Sylla, Pompey, Brutus, and many other Romans and Greeks, but I will only mention Hannibal, a great captain, but fierce and inhuman, who valued letters and knew the Greek language.

"In the holy treasure of learning is true glory stored up. Who has so feeble a mind and so ignoble a courage that, in reading the great deeds of Cæsar, Alexander, Scipio, Hannibal, and so many others, he is not kindled with a great longing to be like them, and would not choose that perpetual fame rather than this perishing life which lasteth but a day or two? But the unlearned know not glory, and seek not to be famous . . . I would have my Courtier be well versed in the Humanities, and understand both the Latin and Greek languages because of the many excellent things written in them. He should study poets, orators, and

historians, and himself write both in rhyme and prose in our Italian tongue, for his own pleasure, but not to publish to the world, save in case of very rare merit. . . . . Let him not trust in flatterers. . . ."

Here M. Pietro Bembo asked why letters should be looked upon as an ornament to arms, and not a knowledge of arms as an ornament to a man of letters? He quotes Petrarch to show how far superior is the mind to the body:

> Giunto Alessandro alla famosa tomba
> Del fero Achille, sospirando disse:
> O fortunato, che si chiara tomba
> Trovasti, e chi di te si alto scrisse!

If Alexander envied Achilles not so much for his deeds as for the good fortune which made him sung by Homer, surely he esteemed the words of Homer more than the arms of Achilles.

After further discussion, Count Lodovico returned to the question of the Courtier being a musician, which was opposed by L. Gaspar Pallavicino, who argued that music was only suitable for women, and might so soften the minds of men as to make them even fear death.

"Say it not!" exclaimed the Count. "For music is a high and holy thing, and wise men have held that the heavens in the courses make melody, and thereby the souls of men are lifted up and restored to virtue. When Socrates was well stricken in years he learnt to play upon the harp, and Plato and Aristotle would have music taught from childhood, as it inclines us towards virtue and happiness. Even Lycurgus in his strict laws allowed music, and Epaminondas and the

brave Achilles were both musicians. Do not deprive our Courtier of music, which sweetens the soul of man and even tames wild beasts. In holy temples it is used to render praise and thanks to God; country folk beguile their labour with this sweet pastime of song, and mariners at sea, and pilgrims on their long journeys, and prisoners in adversity. . . ."

As Count Lodovico paused, his opinion was supported by the Magnifico Giuliano dei Medici, who asserted that music was not only an ornament, but a necessity for the Courtier.

Thus encouraged, the Count now turned to painting as a matter which the Courtier should not omit. "I have read that in olden times, and especially in Greece, all the children of nobles were taught painting as a liberal art in the schools, but it was forbidden to servants and slaves. The Romans also so highly esteemed this art that the first Fabius was a painter, and was proud of the surname of Pictor. How valuable too in war is the skill to draw an outline of the country, rivers, bridges, castles, and encampments? . . . Look upon this beautiful world, the broad sky and shining stars; the pleasant earth and the sea around, the hills, the dales, the rivers; and all so adorned with trees, beautiful flowers and grass, that we may call it a noble and splendid painting drawn by the hand of nature and God. . . . Man cannot attain to painting without the knowledge of many things, and art has ever been held in great esteem, as we may judge from the antique images of marble and bronze which are discovered at this day. For carving and painting are akin, yet I hold that painting is more excellent."

The Lady Emilia here turned to Cristoforo Romano,

who sat amongst the rest, and asked if he agreed with this.

Cristoforo Romano replied that in his opinion there was more labour, more art, and more dignity in carving than in painting. "I think in this matter you speak on account of Raphael, knowing his excellence is of such perfection in painting that sculpture in marble may not approach it. But this is praise of the artist and not of the art. In both arts there is an artificial following of nature, but you will own that truth can be better followed in a figure of marble where the members are all round, and proportioned as nature made them, while in a picture it is all outward sight and colours which deceive the eyes. . . . Again, carving in marble is more difficult, as a fault cannot be amended, and you must begin a new statue, while in painting a man may alter, and add or take away, ever making it better."

The Count made answer, smiling: "I would not have you think me so ignorant as not to understand the excellence of Michelangelo, of yourself and others in carving marble, and I speak of the art and not of the artists. Yet there are many things wanting in statues which you find in painting, especially lights and shadows, which the sculptor cannot give. And if the painter does not make his figure round like a statue, yet he has to thoroughly know and understand all the limbs and muscles so as to give the effect of roundness. He must also have a clear knowledge of perspective, that by measured lines, by lights and shadows, he may make you forget the flat surface. . . .

"Do you think it an easy matter to imitate natural

colours, flesh, clothes, and all other visible things? This the sculptor in marble cannot do, nor yet express the gracious sight of black eyes or blue eyes, with the splendour of their lovely beams. He cannot show the colour of golden hair, nor the glittering of armour, nor a dark night, nor a tempest at sea, nor shining and sparkling lights, nor the burning of a city, nor the morning sunrise, the birth of Aurora in rose-colour with rays of gold and purple. Neither can he show us the sky, the sea, the earth, mountains, woods, meadows, gardens, rivers, cities nor houses; all of which the painter does. On this account I hold painting to be more noble, with a greater range of art than sculpture."

Count Lodovico again alludes to his favourite hero Alexander and his love for Apelles, and then tells how a picture of Protogenes was so highly esteemed, that when Demetrius encamped before Rhodes he would not burn the city for fear of destroying the famous picture, and so he lost the city. He next has a discussion with M. Cesare Gonzaga as to whether the pleasure in seeing the picture of a beautiful woman is not greatly increased by the affection which is felt for her. And the story is told of the five beautiful daughters of Croton, whose charms were all combined by the painter Zeuxis, in order to make one figure of such surpassing excellence that it was sung by the poets and praised for all time.

At this point there occurred one of those delightful episodes which add so much charm to the *Cortegiano*.

Of a sudden there was heard without, a sound of many footsteps on the floor and a tumult of voices; and when all turned in wonder, they saw appear at the

chamber door a splendour of torches, and presently there entered with a great and noble train, the Lord General (Francesco della Rovere, nephew of the Duchess), who had returned from accompanying the Pope on a portion of his way towards Rome. On entering the Palace he had inquired for the Signora Duchessa, and was told what kind of pastime they had in hand for that evening, and how the Signor Lodovico Canossa had been chosen to speak of the Perfect Courtier. He had therefore hastened as much as possible, that he might arrive in time to hear some part of the matter.

As soon as he had duly saluted the Signoria Duchessa, and caused the members of the company who had risen at his coming, to return to their seats, he sat down in the circle with the others, as also did many of his train. Amongst them were the Marchese Febus and Ghirardino the brother of Ceva, Messer Hecto Romano, Vincenzo Calmeta, Orazio Florida, and many others. When all was silent once more, the Lord General said: "Signori, my coming would be too unfortunate if I should hinder the discussion which I believe you are now having. Therefore do me not this injury by depriving yourselves and me of so much pleasure."

Count Lodovico then replied: "I think, my Lord, that silence would be more pleasing to all than speech. For as it has been my lot to bear the burden this evening, I am now weary of speaking, and the rest of the company are weary of hearing, as my words have not been worthy of the subject . . . I would leave my place to another. . . ."

But this was at once opposed by the Magnifico Giuliano, who said that he was waiting to hear how the

Courtier was to use the good conditions and qualities which were needful for him.

The Lord General (or Signor Prefetto), although so young (only seventeen), was wise and discreet beyond his years, and in all his actions showed his greatness of soul and a certain vivacity of intellect which truly foretold the high degree of honour and virtue to which he afterwards rose.

On the words of the Magnifico he suddenly followed: "If all this yet remains to be spoken of, it seems to me that I have arrived in good time; because if I hear in what manner the Courtier must use his good qualities, I shall also hear what they are, and shall thus learn all that has been hitherto said. Therefore do not refuse, Count Lodovico, to pay the remainder of this debt towards which you have already done so much."

"I should not have to pay so great a debt," replied the Count, "if the burden had been more equally divided, but the mistake has been to give authority to so partial a lady"; and with these words he turned smiling towards the Lady Emilia.

"You should not complain of my partiality," she said, "for we will give part of the honour which you call labour unto another." Whereupon she invited Messer Federico Fregoso to continue the discourse, but he excused himself on the ground that he who had defined the qualities of the Courtier, would tell them how they should be used.

At length M. Calmeta suggested that, as it was so late, it would be better to defer the rest of the discussion until the morrow, and choose some less ambitious pastime to close the evening.

This was agreed upon by all, and the Duchess asked Madonna Margherita and Madonna Costanza Fregosa for a dance. At once Barletta, a most pleasing musician and excellent dancer, who constantly entertained the Court, began to play upon his instruments, and the two ladies hand in hand first danced a *Bassa* (a Spanish dance very popular in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries), and then a *Roegarze* (a French dance performed with tambourines) with extreme grace, giving great pleasure to those who saw it. When that was at an end, the night being far advanced, the Signora Duchessa rose to her feet, and each one present, taking leave with all reverence, departed to his rest.

## Book II

*Concerning the fashion, the manner, and the time in which the Perfect Courtier must display his qualities. Various "Facetiæ" (Jests, etc.).*

It is strange to see how it has ever been the custom of old men to praise past times and blame the present. For surely their reason and experience should have made their judgment more perfect, and they should consider that if the world had been steadily growing worse, and the children ever inferior to their parents, we should long since have reached the lowest depths. I believe that this constant error of every period is that in old age there is less vigour of body and mind, therefore the sweet flowers of content fade away from our hearts as the leaves fall from the trees in autumn. We look back upon the days of our youth, as a time when heaven and earth rejoiced with gladness sur-

passing sweet, and the fair springtime of mirth flourished in a pleasant garden most beautiful and rare. While for us in the cold season of age, the Sun of our life draws towards the west, and we are robbed of our past delights. Thus, old men are like unto us when we sail away from a beautiful haven which we watch with longing eyes . . . and we, in the vessel of mortality, are ever driven away by a tempestuous sea which swalloweth up and devoureth all things; for never more may we return to the shore, but always tossed and beaten about by contrary winds, in the end our vessel is broken to pieces upon some rock. . . .

The memory of past delights seems to the old, exceeding rich and rare, and leaves the present cold and dull. Thus when they speak of the Courts of their youth, they cannot praise enough that of Duke Filippo Visconti, or of Duke Borso of Este, and see only good and noble deeds in those times, while they are keenly alive to all the evils of the famous Courts of to-day. These old men blame the present fashions, which in themselves are neither good nor ill, and say that it is not well to see young men riding in the streets, and especially upon mules, nor should they wear furs, nor long robes in winter, nor should a cap be worn until a young man is at least eighteen years of age. They would have us go back to the time when men wore open hose and low shoes, and to look fine, carried a hawk all day on the wrist, without any reason, and would dance with a lady without touching her hand, and other past fashions. But in truth, could any time be more splendid than our own here at this Court of Urbino? . . .

When the following day had come, there was much

talk amongst the gentlemen and ladies of the Court about the discussion of the night before, in which the Lord General was greatly interested. And when the evening drew on, after supper, the company again assembled, and after a while they returned to the subject of the way, the manner, and the time in which the Courtier should practise his good qualities.

M. Unico Aretino was of opinion that this should be left to the discretion of the Courtier, who certainly would not wish to do things out of place, like dancing a Morisco down the street, however well he could do it, or seeking to comfort with merry jests a mother who had lost her child.

M. Federico Fregoso replied that these were extreme cases, but that it often became a matter of delicate consideration to know when a man should show forth his skill or learning, and when he should abstain from doing so. We are all by nature more inclined to blame than to praise, and of this the Courtier should take heed. Thus modesty is much to be commended in a gallant and valiant Knight, and as courage seems greater when it is accompanied with gentleness, so courtesy is more striking in a brave man. Above all things he must avoid affectation. Let him consider well what he proposes to do, the place, the spectators, his own age and profession, and what will be the result of it all.

The elderly Courtier, M. Sigismondo Morello, did not think that he learnt much from these words, although he had heard some rather like them from a friar when he went to confession.

Signor Federico smiled at this, and said that he would give a few more definite examples: "I have

known brave men who had no sense of proportion, and would risk their life as readily to carry off a flock of sheep, as to be foremost in scaling the walls of a beleaguered city. If a Courtier is to show forth feats of chivalry in open tournament, I would have him provide splendid armour, to look as handsome as possible, and a fine horse with goodly trappings, and to have suitable crests and devices, and go forth with such grace as to draw unto him the eyes of all lookers-on, as the magnet attracts iron. He must never be amongst the last to enter the lists, as people take much more heed to those who go first, before the novelty has worn off. There was a famous actor in bygone days who would always go first upon the stage.

A Courtier in his conversation, must always bear in mind to whom he is speaking. Do you remember, M. Morello, the friend I told you of who, in speaking to a lady he had never seen before, boasted of how many men he had slain, and tried to show her how to defend herself from the stroke of a pole-axe . . . until the poor creature was in such terror, that an hour seemed a thousand years before she could escape from him, lest he should kill her as he did the others.

"A gentleman should also be careful where he shows his skill in sport and who he matches himself against."

M. Gaspar Pallavicino remarked that in Lombardy it was often the custom for young nobles in time of festival, to dance all day in the sunshine with the country folk, and spend time with them in wrestling, running, and leaping. In this familiar intercourse he thought there was a pleasing liberty.

"I would have nothing to do with this dancing in the sunshine," replied M. Federico. "But as for the

wrestling, running, and leaping, a noble may join with the countrymen out of courtesy, and if he be well assured of being the winner, otherwise I would not have him meddle with it at all, for it is a poor sight when a 'gentiluomo' is beaten by a 'villano.' The game of *palla* [a kind of tennis] is usually played in public, and I would have our Courtier join in this as a matter which is not his profession, and not appear to bestow much time on it or look for praise, although he may play extremely well. . . ."

"We have a young Cardinal in Rome," said M. Cesare Gonzaga, "who is so proud of his strength that he takes his visitors, although he may never have seen them before, out into his garden, and persuades them to strip to the *giuppone* [short, tight doublet], and have a turn at leaping with him."

M. Federico Fregoso proceeded to point out that some exercises, like dancing, should be done in private, or only amongst your equals, unless the gentleman wears a mask, which gives a certain liberty. After entering into this more fully, he touched upon the subject of music. He recommends singing with the viola, either as a solo, or adding recitation to it, which gives the words so much grace and strength. And the music of four "viole da arco"—(the first and second violin, the viola and the violoncello, which makes a quartette. Castiglione himself had various musical instruments, and was a fine performer)—gives great delight, as it is most sweet and full of harmony. "Such music gives much pleasure to ladies, and is most suitable for their society."

Then follows a discussion as to the age when a man should no longer sing and play in public; it is more

seemly for the old to listen than perform. Every age has its special virtue and vice, and if old men are wiser than the young, they are harder to please and more masterful. . . . Let old men, therefore, be not too lavish of words, or of praising their former deeds too much, and let them turn to account the wisdom and knowledge which they have gained by long experience, and become almost oracles to those who seek them for counsel, adding to the grace of years a certain temperate and cheerful pleasantness. In this way they will prove themselves good Courtiers, and their company will be eagerly sought at all times, and in matters of importance their advice will be of great weight. The young Courtier may also command respect for his judgment, but too much gravity is a bad sign for a young man, although a quiet demure manner is a great gift. For thus the natural lightness of youth is corrected; as in an old man a bright and cheerful temper shows the strength of the mind, and is much to be admired. But, in truth, no fixed rule can be laid down, as no two men are ever alike.

Yet all his good qualities will not acquire for our Courtier general favour with all men, unless he is gentle and courteous in daily life, but indeed, I can scarcely give him more rules than those which M. Morello learnt as a child at confession.

The Lady Emilia smiled at this, but would not suffer the discussion to end thus, and M. Federico continued, taking up the question of the Courtier's behaviour towards his Prince, whom he must love and reverence with all his soul. Thus alone will he be able to serve him truly, and please him in all things.

"It seems to me that in these few words you have

given us the picture of an accomplished flatterer," exclaimed Pietro of Naples.

"You are mistaken, Signor," replied M. Federico, "for flatterers do not love their Lords. . . . Our Courtier will please and obey the commands of him whom he serves, to all good ends, without flattery. If he has a good judgment to know what pleases his Lord, and wit and wisdom to make him love that which it is well for him to hear, he will always be desired as a companion. He may not speak ill of any man, or repeat evil reports, or trifling news; he shall be no gossip, no slanderer, no boaster. He shall very rarely, if ever, ask anything of his Lord for himself, and when he makes an appeal for others, it shall be something just and reasonable which may be granted with honour. . . . If favour and promotion come to him, he shall receive them modestly yet with proper dignity, and not as though he thought himself unworthy. . . ."

This matter was the subject of discussion for a while, and also the question of a Courtier's duty if he served a wicked Prince, or were commanded to do an evil deed. Messer Federico held that a gentleman should leave the service of an unjust or cruel Lord—yet never in time of war or peril—and that he was not bound to do anything against his honour. The next point considered was the dress of a Courtier, which gives an insight into the customs of the sixteenth century. M. Federico said that Italy having become a prey to all nations, had in a way copied their fashions. The French wear their waists too long, and the Germans too short, but the Italians improve upon these. It is always better to choose a grave and quiet, rather than a showy style; therefore black is a most suitable colour

for apparel, or if not quite black, yet somewhat dark, at least for ordinary use; but there is no doubt that bright and cheerful colours look better over armour. There must also be festival garments, well trimmed, rich and splendid, for in public spectacles, games, masquerades and such like, a certain amount of brightness and liveliness sets forth games and tournaments. But on the whole, Spanish quietness in dress is to be admired, as an outward sign of inward repose.

M. Cesare Gonzaga remarked that if a gentleman were worthy, his clothes neither increased nor diminished his reputation.

M. Federico: "That is true. Yet who amongst us, seeing a gentleman with a robe quartered in divers colours and adorned with points and laces and fringes, will not think him a fool or a buffoon?"

M. Pietro Bembo observed that they would not think so in Lombardy, where all men dressed in this way.

The Duchess, with a smile, added that if this were the case, such costume was as suitable for them as long wide sleeves for the Venetians and hoods for the men of Florence.

"In every nation you will find some wise and some foolish," said M. Federico; "but I would have the Courtier with regard to all his garments, take delight in perfect neatness and precision, not devoting himself to one point and neglecting the others. For men are judged by their appearance as well as by their speech and actions."

M. Pallavicino did not agree with this, and quoted the proverb: "The Habit maketh not the Monk."

The next subject debated was the choice of friends, in which it was argued that those who are bound to-

gether in close affection and inseparable company, should be alike in desires, in mind, in judgment, and in disposition, for a man is judged by his friends.

M. Pietro Bembo declared that nowadays very few true friends were to be found. No more are there in the world those Pylades and Orestes, Theseus and Perithous, Scipio and Lælius. . . . So cruelly has he been deceived himself by those he loved and trusted, that henceforth he would lay bare his inmost soul to no man. . . .

M. Federico rejoined that friendship was needful for the life of man, and that if this perfect fellowship were taken away, great indeed would be the loss. "And though some profane this holy name of friendship, yet is that no reason for depriving good men of this great felicity. I believe that there are still amongst us friends whose love is unbroken, and will so endure till death, in no degree less than those men of olden time. Yet I own that this close tie should bind together only two, otherwise there is risk, for as we know, two musical instruments are easier to bring in harmony together than three. I would therefore have our Courtier choose for himself such a special friend, of virtues like unto his own. And this friendship will endure, if he is courteous, gentle, of a generous nature, ever diligent to serve and honour his friend when he is absent as well as present, bearing with him and not ready to take offence, but willing to correct his own faults, and never seeking for himself the highest place. . . ."

After this matter had been talked of, there followed a discussion about games. Young M. Gaspar Pallavicino asked whether a Courtier should play at dice or cards; and the reply was that he might do so in modera-

tion, if it were not for the sake of earning money, or causing loss to other men. With regard to the game of chess, M. Federico spoke of it as most excellent; but having this fault, that to play it well, a man must devote as much time and study as would learn some noble science. (In the highest Italian society there was quite a passion for chess at this time. Pope Leo X had a set of silver chessmen and delighted in the game, as did Isabella d'Este and many distinguished people.)

Many games and amusements are of little value in themselves, yet sometimes bring a man into favour at Court. One point is worthy of notice, that when a Courtier goes to a strange place where he is not known, it is well to let a good report precede him . . . as at least he will be saved the trouble of explaining who he is.

M. Bibbiena was in doubt about this, as he thought it dangerous to raise too much expectation beforehand; he himself had been often deceived.

He was assured that in truth we all believe the opinion of others more than our own. Thus, when a poem was recited as being the work of some famous man, it was praised beyond all reason, until the mistake was discovered, and then no one would listen to it. The same with a certain anthem sung in presence of the Duchess, which was not admired until it was known to be the work of Josquin de Près (a famous French musician). Even with wines M. Gaspar was deceived, and said that one from Genoa was perfect and the other had no taste, when both were from the same cask.

Therefore the Courtier must never run the risk of an evil report. . . . To conclude, I say that he should do

things so well that all men should wonder at him, and he at no man. Yet not showing himself high and haughty at the sight of the good deeds of others, but with gentleness and courtesy giving full praise where it is due. And if matters arise in which he has no knowledge, I would have him willing to confess his ignorance.

"Not like the philosopher Nicoletto," said Calmeta, "who, being appointed Lecturer in Law by the Governor of Padua, would not own that he knew nothing of law, urging the saying of Socrates, that a philosopher should never own that he did not know."

After a little more talk on this subject, M. Federico asked leave to end his discourse, and the Lord General suggested that they should consider the subject of jests and pleasant stories (*facezie*). (Much of the following classification is taken from Cicero's *De Oratore*, lib. ii.)

M. Federico remarked that jests were of two sorts: one as of a pleasant story told with such grace and vigour that they make the whole story pass before the eyes of the listener, and the other kind very short, quick, and subtle, witty sayings which excite laughter. . . . On this there was some discussion, and the Lady Emilia decided that M. Bibbiena should be requested to speak of jests, as it was well known that he had purposed to write on the subject. Afterwards M. Federico should continue the subject of the Courtier.

Then said M. Federico Fregoso: "Madam . . . like a traveller on the way, somewhat weary of his long journey at noontide, I will rest while M. Bibbiena speaks, as it were under some fair tree that casts a pleasant shadow, by the sweet murmuring of living waters. . . ."

After a while, M. Bernardo Bibbiena began, turning towards the Duchess and the Lady Emilia: "I am like one who would sing to the viola when Messer Giacomo Sansecondo [a famous and delightful musician] is standing by. . . . Now in speaking of what causes laughter, man has been described as a living creature that can laugh, to distinguish him from all others. For this reason men have invented many things joyful and refreshing, such as games and pastimes and festive shows. To gain the goodwill of the people, who love those who amuse them, kings of olden days in Rome and Athens and elsewhere, build theatres, and have races and public sports, comedies, tragedies, and the like. In these all men delighted; grave philosophers, workers in the fields, mariners, and even holy men, and prisoners waiting for death, desire some cheerful refreshment. Whatever causes laughter makes the mind cheerful and gives pleasure, so that for a while man forgets the ills with which our life is filled. Thus laughing is very acceptable to all men, and he is worthy of much praise who can excite us to it in suitable time and fashion. I speak not of common buffoons, but the way of the Courtier is far different and to be well considered.

"It does not provoke laughter to mock at a poor soul in misery and calamity, nor to ridicule those who are in high favour and beloved by all men, for this is full of danger. I will give you an instance of the kind of jest, of the longer kind. When Pope Alexander VI died and Pius III was elected, Messer Antonio Agnello was at Rome in the palace with certain friends, and remarked that in the days of Catullus the gates would speak and prophesy, and possibly those in the great hall where they were, might have the same virtue.

Looking up, he pointed to the inscription 'Alexander VI,' and said: 'Look, this gate says "*Alessandro Papa Vi*," which means that he prevailed more by *force* than reason. Now we will see what the other gate says: "N. PP. V." (which means Nicholas Papa Quintus), and he exclaimed: 'Here is bad news, for this gate says "*Nihil Papa Valet.*"'" Several other tales were related, and then came one we may call the Abbot's Judgment.

Duke Federico of Urbino was considering what should be done with the great quantity of rubbish thrown up when the foundation of the palace was dug out, and the Abbot said: "My Lord Duke, I have thought where you can put it. Let there be a great pit dug, and into that you may cast the rubbish without any more trouble." Then Duke Federico asked him, being much amused: "But what will you do with the quantity of earth dug out of this pit of yours?" The Abbot replied: "Let the hole be made so large that it will hold both one and the other." And although the Duke repeated many times that the greater the pit, the more earth would be dug out of it, the poor Abbot never saw the point, and only insisted that the hole should be made so much larger.

M. Bernardo then told a story of the men of Siena, how one of them hearing certain letters read in the Council Chamber, noticed that the expression *il Prelibato* was repeated many times. (This means the *aforesaid*, and was used to avoid repeating the name of a person.) So he asked: "I pray you tell me about this Prelibato? Is he a friend of our Commune?"

M. Pietro laughed and rejoined: "I will now tell you a story about the Florentines. When the Lords of Florence were making war against Pisa, they were very

short of money on account of their great expenses, and considering the matter one day in the Council Chamber, after various other proposals one of the oldest citizens said: 'I have thought of two ways by which, without much trouble, we may raise the money we require: one is that, as our best revenue comes from the customs paid at the gates of Florence, of which there are *XI*, let us quickly make *XI* more, and so we shall double our receipts. The other way is to set up a mint in Pistoia, and another in Prato, neither more nor less than the one in Florence, and let them do nothing else day and night but coin money, all in ducats of gold; and this, I think, would be the quickest way and the least expensive.'"

There was much amusement at this clever device of the citizen, and then M. Bernardo gave an instance of those curious affectations which are ridiculous when they pass all bounds. Thus a certain lady who was at a great festival, sat musing alone and appeared very sad, and when asked the reason of her trouble, she replied: "I am thinking about something which troubles me very much whenever it comes into my mind. It is this, that when the day of judgment comes, all bodies must arise and appear naked before the tribunal of Christ, and I cannot endure the grief I feel in thinking that mine too must be unclothed."

Here Il Magnifico Giuliano offered to tell a most excellent story which he had heard from a merchant of Lucca. This merchant, being once upon a time in Poland, resolved to buy a quantity of sables and sell them with great profit in Italy. As he could not himself go into Muscovy on account of the war between the King of Poland and the Duke of Muscovy, he

arranged by means of the country people that, upon an appointed day, certain merchants of Muscovy should come with their sables to the borders of Poland, where he promised to meet and do business with them. So this merchant of Lucca, travelling with his company towards Muscovy, arrived at the river Boristhenes, which he found frozen hard like marble; and he saw on the other side the Muscovites, who would not trust the men of Poland or cross the river. When they recognised each other, the merchants of Muscovy began to speak in a loud voice, and told the price for which they would sell the sables, but the cold was so intense that the words never came across the river, but were congealed in the air, and remained there completely frozen. When no sound reached the merchant of Lucca and his interpreters, these, being Poles, understood what had happened, and they at once made a great fire in the middle of the frozen river, where it seemed to them that the voices had been intercepted by the frost. When they had done this, and waited for about an hour, the words began to thaw and descend with a noise like snow on the mountains in May, and they were at once well understood. But the men on the other side had already departed, and the merchant of Lucca, thinking that the frozen words asked too high a price for the sables, would not bargain, and came away without them.

Plutarch also tells a similar story of Antipanes, who "visited a certain city where words froze as soon as spoken by reason of the great cold; and later, sounds uttered in the winter melted in the spring, and were heard of the inhabitants." This was to illustrate the truth that those who came as young men to hear Plato

only understood his words "long after," when grown old.

At this all the company laughed, and M. Bernardo offered to tell them another story of the same kind, which if not so subtle, was yet amusing. When talking a few days ago of the new country discovered by the mariners of Portugal, my friend assured me that he had seen an ape, different in shape from those we know, who played chess extremely well. One day, before the King of Portugal, the gentleman who brought her played chess with her, and the ape made such subtle moves that he had the worst of it, and was at last checkmated. At this the gentleman was so vexed, as people often are when they lose the game, that he took up the king, a large heavy piece, and gave the ape a great blow on the head. She jumped on one side, lamenting greatly, and seemed to ask redress from the King. When the gentleman asked her to p'ay again, she refused at first, but at length consented, and once more met with the same success. At length, when she was on the point of giving checkmate, she thought of a plan by which she could avoid any more blows, and, gently catching up a little elbow cushion, she used her left hand to give him mate with a pawn, and with her right hand held the cushion on her head to ward off all strokes. Then she leapt joyfully before the King, as though in token of her victory. Now was not this ape wise and full of forethought and prudence?

M. Cesare Gonzaga said that this ape must have been a learned professor amongst other apes, and they must have sent her from India to acquire reputation in an unknown country.

Then follow some jests which would lose their point if translated, as they depend upon the different meaning of the same word in Italian or in Latin. Somewhat of this kind was one told about Proto da Lucca, who asked the Pope to give him the Bishopric of Calio. The Pope answered: "Know you not that Calio in Spanish means 'I hold my peace'? and this would be untrue each time the Bishop named his title." But Proto was not discouraged, and he repeated his application, saying: "Holy Father, if your Holiness will give me this Bishopric, it will not be without profit to you, for you shall have two offices from me." "And what offices have you to offer me?" asked the Pope. "I will give you the *Officium Principale* and the *Officium Beatæ Marie.*" At this the Pope, although he was a very serious person, could not refrain from laughing.

I asked Fedra (Tommaso Inghirami) once how it was that, when there are prayers in Church on Good Friday not only for Christians, but also for Pagans and Jews, there was no mention made of Cardinals, although Bishops and other prelates are mentioned. He replied that Cardinals are included in the petition which says: "Oremus pro hæreticis et Schismaticis."

Do you not remember how the Lord General told us about Giovantomaso Galeotto, who wondered at being asked 200 ducats for a horse which he said was not worth a quattrino, as amongst other faults he could not endure arms, and it was not possible to make him approach them. On this the Lord General, wishing to reproach him for cowardice, replied: "If the horse has this desire to flee from arms, I only wonder that his owner did not ask 1000 ducats."

*Alinari, Photo*

ELISABETTA GONZAGA, DUCHESS OF URBINO

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Many more jests are given, chiefly depending on various meanings of the same word. There are also grave sayings which show a quick wit. As when a certain Salazza praised a lady for her virtuous qualities and also for her beauty, she said that could not be, as she was well stricken in years. To which he replied: "Signora, with regard to your age, it doth but make you more like the angels, who were the first, and are now the most ancient creatures God ever made."

One day the Great Captain was sitting at table and every place was filled, when he saw two Italian gentlemen standing by, who had done him very good service in the war. He rose at once from his seat and saw that room was made for these two, saying that but for them the company would not now be needing food. Again, another time, when Diego Garzia would have persuaded him to move from a dangerous place exposed to the enemy's guns, he replied: "Since God has not put fear into your mind, do not put it into mine."

With regard to Louis XII, now King of France, when it was said to him soon after his accession that now was the time to revenge himself on his enemies, he made answer, "that it was not the place of the King of France to repay the injuries received by the Duke of Orleans."

Another jest with a certain gravity about it, was the remark of the Archbishop of Florence to Cardinal Alessandro, that men have nothing but their possessions (roba), a body and a soul; their possessions are at the disposal of lawyers, their body is in the hands of physicians, and their soul in that of theologians. To this il Magnifico Giuliano added, that a lawyer was

seldom seen to go to law, nor a physician to take medicine, nor a theologian to be a good Christian.

After other examples, M. Bernardo Bibbiena pointed out how many pleasant and witty sayings come upon one with sudden incredibility. Thus Marius da Volterra said of a prelate who thought himself a very great person, that as he entered St. Peter's, he was accustomed to stoop lest he should strike his head against the architrave of the porch. And il Magnifico said of his servant Golpino that he was so thin and dried up, that one morning as he was blowing the fire to kindle it, he was carried away by the smoke up the chimney, and would have been blown away altogether if he had not been caught in one of the little windows above.

Another story was told of a miser who would not sell his corn when it was at a high price, and when he saw the value go down very much, in despair he hung himself from a beam in his chamber. His servant came in haste and cut the rope, but when the miser came to himself, he insisted that the servant should pay for the halter which he had cut.

And again, Lorenzo dei Medici was found in bed late one morning by a foolish person who blamed him for sleeping so much, and boastfully exclaimed: "I have been out in the Mercato Nuovo and the Vecchio, then beyond the Porto a San Gallo to walk about the walls, and I have done a thousand other things while you were still sleeping." To this Lorenzo replied: "What I have dreamed in one hour is worth more than all that you have done in four hours."

The kind of jesting that is founded upon contempt is often pleasing to great men. Thus King Alfonso I of Aragon, one day before dinner, took off many precious

rings before washing his hands and gave them to a servant near him to hold. This man, feeling sure that the King had not noticed to whom he gave them, as his mind was full of great matters, kept the rings; and as days, weeks, and months passed without inquiry, the guilty servant felt quite safe. So it happened that nearly a year afterwards, as the King was again washing his hands, the same man stepped forward to take the rings. But the King, drawing close to his ear, said: "The first time was enough for you; these will be good for another." Surely this was a piquant, ingenious, and serious taunt, and truly worthy of the magnanimity of an Alexander.

Of this nature are many ironical sayings, when blame is given by means of fair words. As the Great Captain (Gonsalvo de Cordova) said about a knight of his who, after the battle of Cerignola (1503), when all was safe and the victory won, came to meet him in splendid armour, all ready to fight. The Great Captain turned to Ugo di Cardona and said: "There is no need to fear any more storm at sea, for St. Ermo [St. Erasmus, martyr, 304 A.D.] has appeared." The meaning being, that when St. Ermo appears to mariners at sea it is a sign that the tempest is over, and thus when this gentleman arrived, it was a token that all danger was at an end.

There are other occasions when a man who is known to be wise says that which sounds foolish. When Scipio Nasica went to see Ennius, and called to him from the street, he distinctly heard Ennius tell his maidservant that he was not at home, and so departed. Soon afterwards, when Ennius returned the visit, Scipio exclaimed with a loud voice that he was not at home.

"How is this? Do I not know your voice?" said Ennius. Scipio replied: "You are too discourteous; the other day I believed your maid when she said you were not within, and now you will not believe me."

Another variety of jest was that of Raphael the painter, when two Cardinals, with whom he was on intimate terms, found fault in his hearing with a picture he had painted of St. Peter and St. Paul, saying that they were too red in the face. To this Raphael replied: "My lords, do not be surprised, for I have done this after deep study, as there is reason to believe that St. Peter and St. Paul are as you now see them, thus red in Heaven, from shame that the Church is governed by men like you."

It is also a cause of laughter when a man has made a mistake, and in order to cover it, shows by a quick remark that he is not put out of countenance. Not long ago, two enemies were together in the Council Chamber of Florence, and one of them of the house of Altoviti fell asleep. For a joke, the man who sat next to him touched him on the elbow and woke him, saying: "Do you not hear what your adversary says? Reply at once; the Signori ask for your advice." Now in reality, Alamanni had said nothing, either then or before. But Altoviti, still sleepy and suspecting nothing, rose to his feet and exclaimed: "My lords, I say the absolute contrary to that which Alamanni has spoken." On which this one replied: "But I have said nothing." Altoviti immediately rejoined: "To that which you are about to say."

Also when familiar advice is given jestingly. Thus was Cosmo dei Medici's answer to a friend of his who had more money than brains, and who with the help of

Cosmo had obtained an office outside Florence; on setting forth he asked how he might govern well in this position of his, and Cosmo replied: "Dress in rose-colour and talk little." (It is curious to note that rose-colour was aristocratic and the extreme of fashion at this time, as purple had been in Roman days.) In one of Machiavelli's Florentine stories, he remarks that two yards (*canne*) of rose-coloured cloth makes a man of fashion. Of the same kind was the answer given by Count Lodovico to one who wished to pass unknown in a certain dangerous place. "Clothe thyself like a Professor, or in some other apparel that wise men wear."

A man may use a word or expression meaning something different from its ordinary use. The Lord General heard a captain spoken of, who by chance had won a victory, when he was usually defeated. It was said of him that he had ridden into the city clothed in a very handsome doublet of crimson velvet, which he always wore after his victories. Said the Lord General: "It must have been quite new."

It is a witty kind of speech for men of authority to give in a dry tone an answer contrary to expectation. In past times, Alfonso I, King of Aragon, gave to a servant of his a horse with harness and trappings, because the man told him that the night before he had dreamed that His Majesty gave him all these things. Not long after the servant came again, and said he had dreamed that a great number of golden florins were given to him. The King answered: "Do not henceforth believe in dreams any more, for they are not likely to come true."

It was in this manner that the Pope made answer to the Bishop of Cervia, who in order to try his luck said:

"Holy Father, it is reported all over Rome, and in the Palace also, that your Holiness is going to make me Governor." Then the Pope said: "Let the wretches say what they like; have no doubt about it that there is not a word of truth in the report."

Messer Bernardo Bibbiena gave examples of other jests, and pointed out how many different kinds there are. Some will move a man to pleasant laughter, but others have a certain sting in them; we laugh at some as soon as they are heard, while others require thought, and are more appreciated in the end. Some will cause a man to blush, others will stir him to anger. There is also much in the time and manner of telling jests. "But you, Messer Federico, who thought to rest yourself under the leaves of my tree . . . must often have thought that you had entered into the hostel of Montefiore." (This "tristo albergo" had become a proverb at that time. But, indeed, all the country inns of the Cinquecento were usually intolerable; they were mostly kept by Germans.)

"Nay, I am come to so good an inn that I desire to tarry longer in it," replied M. Federico. "For you have not yet told us about those practical jokes [*burle*] you promised us. . . "

". . . A practical joke should be a friendly deception in matters that give little or no offence, and of this kind I will tell you one. Not long since, there arrived in a certain Court a countryman from the neighbourhood of Bergamo, to enter into service with a gentleman of the Court. He was of such good appearance and so finely clad, that although he had done nothing but keep oxen, yet any one who had not heard him speak might take him for a gallant cavalier. And so

two great ladies at the Court were informed that a Spaniard had arrived, whose name was Castilio, as servant to Cardinal Borgia; a very witty man, a musician, a dancer, and the best Courtier in all Spain. The ladies were very anxious to see him, and received him with great honour, causing him to sit down and talking to him with great respect in the presence of all men, most of whom knew him to be only a cowherd from Bergamo. The spectators began to laugh, the more so as the good man always spoke in his native dialect of Bergamo. But the gentlemen who were playing this trick had assured the ladies that he was a great jester, and spoke all languages extremely well, especially the Lombard dialect, so that they were amazed and thought it wonderful. This lasted so long to the great amusement of the company, that the man betrayed himself more and more, until the ladies found out how they had been taken in."

After this, other practical jokes were told which were by no means either harmless or edifying, some being quoted from Boccaccio which were certainly beyond the bounds of all jesting suitable for noble lords or ladies. But in the days of the Renaissance, things were spoken of which would now be passed over in silence.

In the dialogues of the *Cortegiano*, it is Count Gaspar Pallavicino who is supposed always to speak against women, and this he certainly does not fail to do. Il Magnifico Giuliano dei Medici on the other hand, is ever on their side, and the Lady Emilia Pia calls upon him to be their champion. He declares that the Courtier should always bear very great reverence towards women, and he hopes to show that they may

attain to most of those excellent and divine qualities which are spoken of for the Perfect Courtier . . . indeed, that women may have as many virtues as men.

"Nay, a great deal more," said the Lady Emilia; "for as you know virtue is feminine and vice is masculine."

Then said the Duchess: "As it is very late we will put off this discussion until to-morrow, as we shall thus give Signor Giuliano time to imagine the greatest perfection that can be desired in a woman, and to express it in suitable words, as we trust to his wit and judgment."

Il Magnifico accepts the important part allotted to him, being also perfectly willing that every man should make reply against him if he wish to do so, as this will more clearly bring out the perfection of a Lady of the Court.

The Duchess suggests that the discussion shall begin early the next day, in order to give time to accomplish their purpose. Then all the company arose to their feet, and taking leave reverently of the Duchess, every man withdrew to his own chamber.

## Book III

*The most excellent Court of Urbino—Concerning the Lady of the Court, as compared with the Perfect Courtier —Woman in the past and the present—The qualities needful for her perfection.*

This third book of the *Cortegiano*, still dedicated like the others to Messer Alfonso Ariosto, begins with most eloquent praise of the Court of Urbino, which so

far excelled all others in Italy as Hercules in size and strength surpassed other men. It is the earnest purpose of the writer to defend this famous memory from mortal oblivion, and so to describe it that it may live in the mind of posterity. Thus perchance in the future there will not be wanting those who will envy this time, as they who read of the wonderful things of the past, believe them to be still greater than any eloquence can describe. So the noble cavaliers and most worthy ladies who may read this book, will surely believe that the Court of Urbino was far more excellent and adorned with men of more singular talent than can ever be expressed by words.

When the company was assembled at the usual place on the following day, the Duchess addressed Il Magnifico Giuliano and called upon him to show forth the beauties of this Lady of the Court. After some further discussion he turned to her and said courteously: "Signora, since it is your pleasure, I will say what occurs to me, but I doubt if I shall give satisfaction. It would be much easier for me to picture a lady who deserves to be queen of the world than a perfect lady of the Court, for of her I scarcely know where to find an example; but of a queen I have no need to seek far, for I have only to imagine the heavenly qualities of a lady I know and see before me. . . ."

"Do not go beyond your commission, Signor Magnifico, but picture to us a lady of the palace worthy to serve this mistress," said the Duchess.

"I will seek, then, to describe this most excellent lady as I would have her, and when I have succeeded I will take her for my own, after the example of Pygmalion. Count Gaspar has said that the same

rules given for the Courtier apply also to the lady; but that is not my opinion, for although some qualities are common to both, yet there are others more suitable to the woman than the man, and some which are quite alien to her. The same may be said of bodily exercises; but above all, in her manner, words, gestures, and deportment, the woman should be altogether unlike the man. For as he should show a certain manliness, strong and steadfast, it is well for a woman to have a soft and delicate tenderness, with a kind of womanly sweetness in all her movements, that whether she go, or stand or speak, she will ever appear to be a woman without any likeness to a man. Bearing this principle in mind, she may be endowed with most of the good qualities of the Courtier. Many virtues of the mind are quite as necessary for the woman as for the man. Also, I would have her of noble birth, one who avoids affectation, has a natural grace in all she does, witty and prudent, not envious nor evil-speaking, nor vain, but knowing how to win and keep the good will of her Lady and of all others. Beauty is more needful for her than for the Courtier, as, in truth, much is wanting to a woman who has no beauty. She must be more circumspect, and more careful to give no occasion for ill reports. . . . I would have her share the Courtier's virtues of wisdom, magnanimity, prudence, and others; she must be good and discreet, manage her husband's goods and her house and children when she is married, and all things needful to the good mother of a family. A Lady of the Court must also have a certain pleasing affability and sweetness of manner, with a quick vivacity of mind, and quiet, modest ways." Then follow full directions concerning all she may do and leave

undone, that she may be well esteemed of all. "Thus adorned with all good behaviour, showing supreme grace in all bodily exercises suitable to a lady, her conversation being gracious, full of wisdom and pleasantness, she shall be not only beloved, but held in reverence by all men, and so prove worthy to be compared with the Perfect Courtier, both for the qualities of mind and body."

Throughout the whole of this discussion about women, we notice that Count Lodovico Canossa is the advocate on the other side, and never fails to say something disparaging to the Lady of the Court. It is quite possible that many of his remarks are made jestingly, or to show what a very fine witty fellow this young lord thinks himself; but many of his words would be considered not only very rude, but quite impossible at the present day, when we only use plain straightforward language in the homely Saxon phrase of the Bible.

The courtly Florentine, Il Magnifico Giuliano, is urged by this opposition to speak in glowing terms of praise, but the gentle sweetly feminine woman is his ideal, and he has not much sympathy with more vigorous qualities. Thus when Cesare Gonzaga says that he has seen women play at tennis, practise feats of arms, ride and hunt, Il Magnifico says:

"Since I am to picture this Lady according to my mind, I would not have her practise these robust and manly exercises, and even in those which are suitable for women, I would have her preserve that gentleness and soft delicacy which are so attractive. In her dancing let there be no swift and violent movements, and in her singing and playing, no strong contrasts

which show more art than sweetness. She should choose musical instruments suitable to this: for imagine how ungraceful a thing it would be to see a lady playing the drum, or blowing a flute or a trumpet, or any such-like instrument. . . . When she is asked to dance, to sing or play, she should be somewhat entreated, and only consent with a certain modest timidity. She should also wear appropriate garments, and although it is lawful and necessary that women should think more of their beauty than men, and even add to the gift of nature, they should always show that they do not give too much study or care to it. . . . I would have the lady skilled in letters, in music, in drawing or painting, and she should know how to dance and to entertain on festal occasions. And so in conversing, in smiling, in devising games and pastimes, she will give the greatest pleasure to all who are in her company. To these lighter gifts, I would also add the virtues I spoke of—magnanimity, temperance, strength of mind, prudence, and others, that she may not only give pleasure, but be held in reverence by all."

"As you give women all these virtues," said Count Gaspar, smiling, "I wonder that you do not suffer them to rule cities, to make laws and to lead armies, while men are sent to the kitchen or to spin."

"Perhaps that would not be amiss," replied Il Magnifico, also with a smile. "Do you not know that Plato, who was not very friendly to women, would give them the governing of cities, and all the martial offices of men? Do you not believe that many might be found who could rule cities and armies as well as men? But I have said nothing

about this, as I picture a Lady of the Court and not a Queen. . . ."

Count Gaspar insisted that all this was arrant flattery, and that it could not really please women to be told that they had so many virtues that Socrates, Cato, and all the philosophers in the world were not to be compared to them. He continues to argue that women are in all things inferior to men, and are indeed a defect of nature. But M. Giuliano will not agree to this, and points out how women in all times have distinguished themselves, although he owns that historians have been ever sparing in writing the praise of women. Is it not recorded that some have made war and won glorious victories, have governed kingdoms with great wisdom and justice, and have done all that men can do? Have not many distinguished themselves in philosophy? and others have been most excellent in poetry? While some have pleaded in law, and both accused and defended most eloquently before judges. Of manual work it would be too long to speak, and there is no need to bear testimony." Then follows a long reasoning about Form and Matter and male and female, until at last the Lady Emilia can stand it no longer, and asks for plainer talk which may be understood.

A little later the question of timidity in women is touched upon, as often arising from vivid imagination and subtleness of spirit, while at times the courage of men may be ignorance of danger without a clear knowledge of the peril they incur. True courage comes of a determined will which esteems loyalty and duty above all things, and will go forward to meet peril, although there is no other way than death. Of this

sort we have seen and heard, both with great men and with women, who in ancient time and in the present day have shown this greatness of soul, and achieved matters worthy of infinite praise.

M. Niccolò Frisio here remarked that the first woman in offending, made others to offend also against God, and left for an inheritance to mankind, death, affliction, sorrow, and all the misery and calamity in the world to-day.

Il Magnifico Giuliano replied: "If you will enter into the Sacristy [touch upon sacred things], do you not know how that same error was atoned for by a woman, and thereby we have attained far more than we had lost, so that the fault thus acquitted with so much merit is counted most happy?

"But I will not now tell you how inferior all creatures are in dignity to the Virgin, Our Lady, nor will I mix up holy things with this our playful reasoning. I will not dwell upon the many women who with splendid constancy suffered cruel martyrdom under tyrants for the name of Christ, nor on those who with their learning confuted in argument so many idolaters. And if you say that this was by a miracle and the grace of God, I say that no virtue deserves more praise. . . . Think how many there were of whom the world never heard, for their good works were done in secret, desiring not the praise of men. . . ." Then follows a fierce attack upon those hypocrites who, seeming to be religious men, are full of wickedness. The Lady Emilia is much troubled, as she says that he must mean the Friars, although he has not mentioned them by name. This gives us a curious insight into the popular feeling of the day.

Il Magnifico is challenged by Count Gaspar to give the names of women akin to great men who have been of equal merit, and he replies that his only difficulty is the number of such brave ladies. "If time allowed me I would tell you the history of Octavia, wife of Mark Antony and sister to Augustus; of Portia, daughter of Cato and wife of Brutus; of Caia Cecilia, wife of Tarquinius Priscus; of Cornelia, daughter of Scipio, and of many who are well known. And not only these of our land, but also barbarians [foreigners] such as Alexandra, the wife of Alexander King of the Jews, who, after her husband's death, behaved with such courage and wisdom that she stilled the tumult amongst the people and secured the succession for her young sons. . . . Know you not also that the wife and sisters of Mithridates showed far less fear of death than Mithridates himself? And the wife of Hasdrubal had more fortitude than himself, and Harmonia, daughter of Gelone King of Syracuse, desired to die in the burning of her native city."

M. Niccolò Frisio here tells the old story of a woman's obstinacy, who when she was drowning would have the last word against her husband, holding up her fingers to make the sign of scissors when she could no longer speak. At this Il Magnifico laughed, but objected that obstinacy, which has a noble purpose, should be called steadfastness. He alluded to Leona, in whose honour the Athenians placed the statue of a lioness without a tongue, before the gate of the castle, as a token of the great virtue of silence. For this woman, being in the secret of a conspiracy against the tyrants, suffered herself to be torn to pieces with cruel tortures rather than betray her friends.

The Lady Margherita Gonzaga asks to have fuller particulars about virtuous acts done by women, that the memory of them may not be lost.

Il Magnifico Giuliano is quite willing to please her, and amongst other stories tells the following:

A certain Camma was a most beautiful and charming young woman, greatly devoted to her husband Sinatto. It happened that Sinorige, the ruler of the city in which they dwelt, fell in love with Camma, and in order to obtain her for his wife caused Sinatto to be murdered. He then made suit to Camma, but she steadily refused him, until, seeing there was no hope of escape, she at length consented. But on the wedding-day, in the temple of Diana, she caused a certain sweet drink to be brought to her, and after drinking half of it she, as was the custom, handed the goblet to Sinorige, who finished the draught. Then Camma fell on her knees before the image of Diana, and joyfully declared to the goddess that with gladness and content she was going forth to join the sweet company of her husband's soul, whom in life and death she loved better than her own self. Then she bid Sinorige give orders to prepare a grave for himself and not a marriage bed, as she offered him a sacrifice to the shade of Sinatto. Thus it happened, for no remedies were of any avail against the poison. When she heard of the ruler's death, Camma looked up from her couch, and called upon the name of Sinatto, saying: 'Oh, most sweet consort, now that I have given thee the last tokens of tears and revenge, and there remains naught else I can do for thee here, I flee the world and this life which without thee is most cruel, and which was only dear to me for thy sake. Come, then, and meet me, signor

mio, and embrace this soul which comes so willingly to thee.' Then with outspread arms, as though embracing him, she passed away. Now, Frisio, what say you to this?"

Frisio replied: "I think you wish to make the ladies weep. But allowing this to be true, I say you will no longer find such women in the world."

Il Magnifico asserted the contrary, and in order to prove it, told the story of a lady of Pisa very well known to his family. Her husband had been carried away by pirates and was believed to be dead, but after a long time the son of this Messer Tomaso found him alive in Barbary, redeemed him and brought him home. When his loving wife received the letter telling her of her son's success and the coming of her husband, she was so overcome with exceeding joy that she lifted her eyes to heaven, and calling on the name of her beloved one, she fell down dead.

Upon this Count Gaspar remarked that women do things in excess. Thus this woman did harm to herself, her children, and her husband, turning the joy of his liberty into bitterness.

"I give her as an instance of a wife who loved her husband," said Il Magnifico. "I will now tell you of women who have been of great service to the world. Some have been deemed worthy to be called goddesses, as Pallas and Ceres and the Sibyls by whose mouth great things have been foretold. Some have taught great men, as Aspasia who instructed Pericles, and Diotima who, also by a sacrifice, saved Athens from the plague. I could tell you of Nichostrata, mother of Evander, who taught letters to the Latins (more legendary than historical), and of Corinna and Sappho who

were most excellent in poetry; and, indeed, perhaps women had no less part in causing the greatness of Rome than men." He then tells the legend of the Trojan women who, when their ships were tossed by the stormy sea on the coast of Italy, near the mouth of the Tiber, weary of their wanderings, when the men were absent burnt the ships, and so the Trojans joined with the Latins in founding Rome. And again, the story of the Sabine women who made peace between their Roman husbands and their Sabine kindred, so that they all combined to form one people.

Count Gaspar at this point interposed with the story of the treachery of that daughter of Sp. Tarpeius who betrayed Rome, and would have suffered the enemy to take the Capitol.

"I tell you of an infinite number of good women, and you speak of but one who did evil," said M. Giuliano. Then he went on to speak of the hand-maidens who once delivered Rome, of the brave women of Scio who discomfited Philip of Macedon, of the Persian wives who stayed their husbands from flight, of the women of Saguntum who took up arms against Hannibal, and many more instances. But Count Gaspar was not convinced, and replied scornfully: "God knows if all this happened, for those times are so far off, and many lies are told. . . ."

Il Magnifico next came to the great rulers amongst women, such as Amalasunta Queen of the Goths, Theodolinda Queen of the Lombards, both distinguished for wisdom and virtue; Theodora Empress of Greece, and in Italy the famous Countess Matilda, "whose praise I leave to be spoken by Count Lodovico Canossa, as he is of her house. How many noble ladies

do we not find famous in past time of the most noble house of Montefeltro? And of the family of Gonzaga and of Este, and of Pio also, not speaking of those who are present? Out of Italy we have seen Anne Queen of France, a very great lady, equal in justice, liberality, and holiness of life to the kings Charles VIII and Louis XII, who were both of them her husbands. See, too, the Lady Marguerite, daughter of the Emperor Maximilian, who with the very greatest justice and wisdom has ruled her State and still continues to do so.

"Consider what king or prince there has been in our days that can be compared to Queen Isabel of Spain. . . . Unless all the Spanish people have conspired to praise her unjustly, there has not been in our time a more shining example of true goodness, of greatness of soul, courage, wisdom, religion, courtesy, and generosity, indeed of all virtues, than Queen Isabel. And her great renown is indeed well deserved . . . for all men know that she found the greater part of Castile in possession of the great nobles, yet she recovered the whole with so much justice and in such manner, that they remained her friends and were willing to make the surrender. It is also well known with what courage and wisdom she ever defended her realm from the most powerful enemies. Likewise to her may be given the honour of the glorious conquest of Granada. In that long and difficult war against stubborn foes, who fought for their life, for their laws, and, as it seemed to them, for their God, she showed so much wisdom and courage in her own person that few princes have ever equalled her." He grows eloquent over the greatness and the many virtues of Queen Isabel, pointing out her marvellous gift in the choice of her ministers and generals, of

whom the most famous, the great Captain Gonsalvo de Cordova, by his splendid victories and great deeds, will ever be remembered as her choice and share in her immortal memory. (During his stay in Spain Castiglione must have heard much of the love and reverence with which the people remembered their great queen.)

Returning to Italy, Il Magnifico has much praise to give to many excellent ladies. "Not long ago there died in Naples the other Queen of Hungary, Beatrice, the wife of the mighty and glorious King Mathias Corvinus of Hungary, a most gifted lady, and a paragon worthy of her husband. Likewise the Duchess Isabel of Aragon, a most worthy sister to Ferdinand King of Naples, who like unto gold in the fire, so in the tempests of cruel fortune, has shown forth her virtue and her courage. If you turn towards Lombardy you will still behold the Lady Isabella Marchesa of Mantua, whose most excellent virtues cannot have justice done to them in the temperate form in which I am compelled to speak of them here. I am grieved also that you have not all known the Duchess Beatrice of Milan, her sister, for had you done so you would never more marvel at a woman's talent. And Signora Leonora of Aragon, Duchess of Ferrara, the mother of both these last-mentioned ladies, was such that the excellence of her splendid qualities bore testimony to the world that she was not only a worthy king's daughter, but that she deserved to be queen over a far greater state than any possessed by her ancestors.

"And I must speak of another, for how many men do you know in the world who could endure the bitter strokes of fortune with such fortitude as Queen Isabel of Naples? Even after the loss of her kingdom, the

exile and death of King Federico her husband and two of her sons, and the imprisonment of the Duke of Calabria her eldest, she yet proves herself a queen, and so bears the calamity of miserable poverty that all may certify how in her changed fortunes she still remains the same. I will not mention to you many other great ladies, and other women of low degree . . . who, fearless of death, have shown forth the most noble and invincible courage, and have been sung by great poets. I could tell you of many famous in letters, in music, in painting, and in sculpture . . . and if at the present day we find not in the world those great queens who went forth to conquer far countries and raise mighty buildings, pyramids, and cities, like Thomiris Queen of Scythia, Artemesia, Zenobia, Semiramis, or Cleopatra, neither have we men like Cæsar, Alexander, Scipio, Lucullus and others."

Messer Niccolò Frisio disputed this statement, and maintained that there were not wanting at the present time women with the love of pleasure and the evil qualities of a Cleopatra or a Semiramis.

Il Magnifico rebuked him for this remark, and declared that if such women might possibly be found, there were many more men at the present day who would rival Sardanapalus.

A long and curious discussion follows after this, concerning the comparative temptation of men and women, their virtues and their failings, which gives a vivid insight into public opinion on such matters in the days of the Renaissance. It is the more interesting and unbiassed as being written by a noble of such high reputation himself as Count Baldassare Castiglione, the Perfect Courtier, the knight *sans peur et*

*sans reproche*, of high unblemished fame, even in that scandal-loving age. We have already seen how low the standard of morality was for great princes, when their illegitimate children were treated in almost every respect like those born in lawful wedlock. The daughters were openly acknowledged, well dowered, and married into noble families; the sons had every distinguished career open to them, and if specially vigorous and talented, had an excellent chance of superseding the lawful heir to his father's State. Instances of this are too numerous to quote, and not least so in the houses of Montefeltro, Este, and Gonzaga. With regard to the ladies, they have most eager and eloquent advocates in the Signor Giuliano dei Medici and Cesare Gonzaga, who ransack the history of the world for striking examples of womanly heroism and devotion, and especially of those who have gladly chosen death rather than dishonour. But we cannot help thinking that at the present day all these protestations and illustrations would be considered unnecessary, although we must not forget that it is not so long ago, since it was thought well to declare in the epitaph of a "dear dead lady" that she was *virtuous*. Probably there is more change in custom and language than in manners, and the beautiful, accomplished ladies of the Italian Renaissance were quite as estimable in every way as their representatives to-day.

Towards the end of the debate, Count Gaspar Pallavicino remarked that the ladies had great cause to thank him, as without his opposition they would not have received such high praise.

Then said M. Cesare Gonzaga: "It was scarcely

needful on our part, as who does not know that without women we should have no content or delight in this life of ours, which without them would be rude indeed and without all sweetness? They quicken our minds in the understanding of great matters, and in time of war they make men fearless and of good courage. . . . Thus in the great battles against the Moors, Queen Isabel of Spain constantly took her ladies with her into the camp, and valiant men were encouraged to noble deeds by the desire to distinguish themselves before the ladies of their choice.

"Do you not see that all gracious exercises which delight the world have their origin in the desire to please women? Otherwise, who would learn to dance, or dwell upon sweet music? Who would write poetry, at least in our mother tongue, if it were not to express love for women? Think how many noble poems we should have lost, both in Latin and Greek, if women had been held in small estimation by poets. What a loss it would have been if M. Francesco Petrarca had not written about his love so divinely in our language, only moved thereto by Madonna Laura! I do not name to you all the other poets of this time who take their inspiration from women. . . ." (As Castiglione himself in his *Tirsi*, where he praises the Duchess of Urbino.)

Il Magnifico was asked to say more, but he professed himself so thoroughly satisfied with the lady he had pictured, that if the other gentlemen were not satisfied, he only asked to keep her for himself.

There was some talk as to how a lady should know a true lover, and the last speaker suggests that she should take him to the "Isola Ferma." (In old romances, such as *Amadis de Gaul*, this is an en-

chanted island, with an arch at the entrance of the gardens, and the statue of a man blowing a trumpet. The unfaithful lover was received by dreadful sounds mingled with fire and smoke, while the true lover was welcomed by the sweetest music.) On the subject of love there was much discussion, in which most of the company had something to say. The Lady Emilia held that the law of love was that the man should set all his desires to please the beloved woman, and should desire that which she desired. He should both sincerely love and also be himself worthy of love; he should make his own wishes and his very soul obedient to that of his lady, and reckon this his chief joy and happiness, for thus do those who truly love.

Il Magnifico thought that the Courtier should reveal his love to the lady more by signs and tokens than by words, as greater affection could thus be shown than by a thousand words. . . . The eyes are the trusty messengers who carry the embassy of the heart, for they often declare with more force the inward passion than the tongue, or letters, or messages; and not only disclose the thoughts, but often kindle love in the heart of the person beloved. There was much to say on this subject, until at length the Duchess thought it was growing late, and remarked: "If we tarry until to-morrow we shall have more time, and the praise and blame which some of you say are given in excess to women, will have passed out of the minds of these lords, so that they will be more capable of appreciating the truth which they will hear." Thus spoke the Signora Duchessa, and, rising to her feet, she courteously dismissed all the company and retired to her private chamber, each man departing to his rest.

*Hanfstaengl, Photo* *Raphael*

BERNARDO DOVISI OF BIBBIENA

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## Book IV

*In commemoration of departed friends—Concerning the Perfect Courtier in relation to his Prince — The ideal government — The duties of princes — The Courtier considered as a lover—The Platonism of the Renaissance with regard to Heavenly Beauty and Heavenly Love—A rapturous invocation—The dawn of day.*

When Count Baldassare Castiglione had satisfied himself with regard to the Fourth Book of his *Cortegiano*, and left it in its final shape, he says that the names of the speakers called to his remembrance our human misery and deceitful hopes. With him friendship was almost a religion, and he breaks forth into loving commemoration of three most rare gentlemen, who were cut off in the flower of their age and the height of their honour by cruel death. First the Signor Gaspar Pallavicino, whose life was ended long before he came to ripe age (in 1511, at the age of twenty-five). He was a great loss, not only to his friends and kinsmen, but to his country and to all Lombardy. Not long after died Messer Cesare Gonzaga, the close and devoted friend of Castiglione, to the bitter and sorrowful disappointment of all who hoped for him the most splendid career. The third was M. Roberto da Bari, another of those noble knights who would have made the Court of Urbino still more famous.

Of other great men who took part in the colloquies, M. Federico Fregoso was made Archbishop of Salerno; Signor Lodovico Canossa, Bishop of Bayeux (1520);

M. Ottaviano Fregoso, Doge of Genoa (1513); M. Bernardo Bibbiena, Cardinal of Santa Maria in Portico (1513); M. Pietro Bembo Secretary to Pope Leo X; Il Magnifico Giuliano dei Medici had become Duke of Nemours; and Signor Francesco Maria Rovere, Prefect of Rome, and also Duke of Urbino, in succession to his uncle, Duke Guidobaldo. . . .

Let us now return to our reasoning concerning the Courtier. All the noble qualities, the virtues and the graces which he should possess, have been defined on the previous nights and illustrated from ancient and modern history, and we rise now to the supreme climax when the various members of the company set themselves to discover the chief end of a Courtier. Signor Ottaviano holds this to be the true service of his Prince, whose favour and affection he must gain by means of all the noble qualities and excellent gifts which have been enumerated. With this favour, the Courtier must take courage to oppose his Lord in evil doings and lead him, as it were, unconsciously towards all virtue and goodness. . . . But above everything he must avoid flattery, which is the ruin of a Prince, leading him to pride and self-indulgence. By a quaint simile, such a great man is compared to one of those stuffed images (colossi) made in Rome at the carnival, in the Piazza Navona, outwardly most gorgeously apparelled, but inwardly full of tow and rags.

We are also told that ignorance in music, in dancing, or in riding is a small matter, as a man is soon made aware of it, but from the ignorance of a Prince in governing, endless evils follow—death and destruction —so that it is the deadliest plague on earth. Yet some most incapable rulers are not ashamed to display their

grievous mistakes before the face of the whole world, blinded as they are by the flatterers who surround them. What punishment do not these evil counsellors deserve!

Then follows a discussion as to whether the virtues needed by the Perfect Courtier could be learnt, or whether they were inherent in some men. Upon this M. Gaspar tells the fable of Epimetheus (taken from the *Protagoras* of Plato), who was so unwise in distributing the gifts of nature that he left man more bare and defenceless than any other living creature. Upon this, Prometheus stole artificial wisdom, fire, and such like from Minerva and Vulcan, that man might have means to live; but there was no principle of government, no mutual help or fellowship, until Jupiter took pity on him and sent Mercury to distribute justice and reverence, not to a chosen few, but to all alike. And a law was made that a man who "showed no justice or reverence should be put to death as a plague to the State." As punishment is thus not for retaliation, but to prevent future wrong, Protagoras asserts that this is a proof that certain virtues can be acquired "from study, exercise, and teaching." This matter is argued at length in the Court of Urbino.

Then Signor Ottaviano returns to the Perfect Courtier, who will encourage in his Prince the growth of true manliness, justice, courage, and wisdom, also generosity and modesty, pleasantness, courtesy and tact in conversation, and other virtues. Thus shall spring up in the mind of the Prince such delicious flowers and fruits as the most beautiful gardens in the world possess not, and the Courtier shall rejoice that he has not bestowed upon his lord gold or silver,

precious vessels or rich garments . . . but that highest and rarest virtue, the gift of reigning aright; which alone is enough to make men happy, and to bring back to the world the Golden Age.

Next follows a very favourite subject of argument in olden time as in the days of the Renaissance: which is the happiest government and likeliest to bring again that Golden Age—the rule of a good Prince or that of a wise Commonwealth? The various speakers have taken their impressions from the Republic of Plato, from the works of Aristotle, from Beroaldo in his *De Optimo Statu et de Principe*, and many other writers.

Signor Ottaviano chooses the rule of a good Prince, who is, he says, an image of God upon earth, showing his people the clear light of his justice, with some dim shadow of heavenly reasoning and understanding. The greatest proof of his goodness is the goodness of his people, for the life of the Prince is a law and example unto his people. He will have no need to guard himself as tyrants do, for his life will be free and safe, and as dear to his subjects as their own. His will be a gentle rule, not that of a master over his slaves, but of a good father over his loving children. . . . The Prince should have two Councils of wise men to advise him, chosen one from the Nobles and another from the Commons, or men of lower degree, and this form of government will thus combine the advantages of a Kingdom and a Commonwealth. So great shall be his love of his country that he will be just and equal in bestowing honour and promotion to those only who deserve it. A truly great government is that under which the subjects are fortunate in mind, in body, and in fortune, well ruled and commanded. I would also

have my Prince liberal and splendid, giving freely to all men, for, as is said, God is the Treasurer of generous princes. He should entertain his people with magnificent banquets, feasts, games, and public spectacles; he should have a great number of excellent horses both for use in war and for pleasure in peace; also hawks and hounds, with all other things for the pleasure of great nobles and of the people.

Thus in our days have we seen the Signor Francesco Gonzaga, Marchese of Mantua, so that he seemed rather king of all Italy than lord of one city. The Prince should also raise great buildings, both for his honour in life and to leave his memory to posterity, as the Duke Federico did with this noble palace, and Pope Julius is now doing in the Temple of St. Peter, and the way which goes from the Palace to the Belvedere, and many other buildings. See also the works of the ancient Romans, of which so many splendid ruins are seen about Rome, Naples, Pozzuoli, Baia, Civita Vecchia, Porto, and outside Italy in so many places, which bear witness to their greatness. . . . When Signor Ottaviano had made an end of speaking about the goodness and greatness of his Prince, Niccolò Frisio rejoined that he feared a Prince with all those noble qualities would be as rare as the Commonwealth of Plato, and that we shall never see such a one, unless it be perchance in Heaven.

With regard to the still more Perfect Courtier, who has guided his Prince to this excellence, another question has arisen, as to whether his various good qualities are quite compatible with each other. He is to have all the arts and graces which will make him an acceptable lover, and yet at the same time he is to have

all that knowledge and experience which can only come with years. Are we therefore to conclude that the Perfect Courtier must be advanced in life? Then surely as a lover he will be scorned by the ladies and mocked by the young men.

It is at this point that Messer Pietro Bembo first gently alludes to that love which is sweet without any bitterness, which is suitable to all, and which brings with it only great praise and happiness. The Duchess at once understands the high and noble theme which he has in mind, and both she and the Lady Emilia Pia are all impatience to hear him. His reply that "he must first ask counsel from the hermit of his Lavinello," alludes to a character in his *Asolani* (so called from Asolo, where his friend Catarina Cornaro, Queen of Cyprus, held her Court for so many years of stately exile). This hermit initiates Lavinello into the mysteries of the True and Eternal Love, of which all earthly love is but a dim reflection. It was because Bembo had already so deeply studied the subject of high Platonic Love—not only in the *Symposium*, but also transformed into Christian mysticism by Marsilio Ficino and others—that he is selected in the *Cortegiano* as the high-priest of Renaissance Platonism.

Then, as Messer Pietro Bembo paused for a brief space to marshal his thoughts for this supreme effort, we, meanwhile, may have leisure to notice the connecting link whereby the coming peroration is joined on to all that has gone before.

We have traced throughout the pages of the *Cortegiano* the gradual fashioning of the Perfect Courtier; we have seen him chosen from a noble race, schooled in all learning, art, and science, and adorned with every

knightly accomplishment. Trained alike for camp and court, for warfare and for love, he is held up to admiration on every side of his character, until we can but gaze upon him as

> A creature *far* too bright and good
> For human nature's daily food.

What remains for one so far raised above his peers but to dwell upon his own perfection, and so be tempted like Narcissus to fade away in futile self-admiration? It has been wisely said that for this Courtier was needed some whole-hearted passionate devotion which would carry him out of himself, for "it is not good for a man to sit brooding on his own character, or to play the fancier to his own virtues. Nothing great was ever accomplished by one whose ruling passion was self-improvement, who busied himself chiefly about the cultivation of his own mind or the condition of his own soul."[1]

In those days of the Renaissance, what could occur to a scholar like Castiglione, the humble disciple of Marsilio Ficino, greatest of Christian Platonists, more suited for the salvation of his too perfect Courtier than the mystic worship of Divine Love and Beauty? Indeed, we see now in what manner the whole book has been leading up to this supreme close; the glowing confession of faith from one to whom the transcendental mysticism of Plato's Dialogues had become so steeped in Christian philosophy as to be a religion in itself. Throughout this oration of Bembo we can trace at every point the source of his inspiration, but to enter fully into this would need a whole volume on Platonic

[1] Walter Raleigh.

philosophy. He is deeply indebted to the commentaries on the *Symposium* and the *Phædrus* of Plato, in which Marsilio Ficino sought for bonds of union between Pagan civilisation and the Faith of Christ, amongst other enthusiasts, in the Medicean garden of the Villa di Careggi.

Messer Pietro treats of that Love which is more than the desire of beauty, being the instinct of immortality in a mortal creature. Knowledge must come before desire, and our soul has three ways of knowing: by sense which is common to us with the animal world, by reason which gives choice proper to man, and by understanding which brings man into communion with the angels . . . Then we have an eloquent dissertation on the nature of beauty, which is so excellent in itself that the true love of it is most good and holy . . . This was a subject of discussion amongst the company, but Messer Pietro repeated his assertion. "Signori, I should not wish that by speaking ill of beauty, which is a holy thing, any of us should incur the wrath of God as profane and wicked. I say that from God it cometh and is like unto a circle of which goodness is the centre. Very seldom does an evil soul dwell in a beautiful body, and therefore is outward beauty a sign of the inward beauty of the soul, as the beauty of the buds shows forth the coming goodness of the fruit. See how clearly too in the face of a lion, a horse, and an eagle we discern anger, fierceness, and pride; in lambs and doves, simplicity and innocence; craftiness in foxes and wolves, and so in other creatures.

"And if you will consider these things, you will see that all that is good and useful has ever the grace of beauty. Look upon this mighty world which God has

made . . . the round heaven (thus spoken of by Plato and Cicero), adorned with so many divine lights, and the earth in the centre sustained by its own weight, the sun which, in turning about, illumines the whole . . . the moon that takes her light from him . . . and the other five stars [the planets known then]. . . . These are all so wonderful and so beautiful, that all men's wisdom cannot imagine anything more perfect. Think, too, of the figure of man, which may be called a little world . . . so beautiful in every part; also the feathers of birds and the leaves and boughs of trees. . . ." He then turns from the beauties of nature, the comely and holy beauty of heaven and earth and sea, of woods and rivers and flowers . . . to all the beauties of art. Thus Beauty is the true monument of the soul's victory, as with heavenly influence she rules material things. . . .

In the argument which followed, Bembo admitted that what some might call beauty in a face, was all unworthy of so honourable and noble a name; a fair soul must shine through from within to lighten up perfect beauty.

Messer Pietro was silent, and needed the persuasion of the Duchess and others to rise to his impassioned praise of heavenly love, "the inspirer of all heroism, the source of happiness in life and death." "Too unfortunate were our human nature if the soul were nourished alone by the pleasures of sense, and not her own nobler part of reason. And because I know myself unworthy to speak of the most holy mysteries of Love, I beseech him to guide my thoughts and tongue, that heavenly spirit to whom from childhood all my life has been dedicated. . . ." He then continues to unfold the mysteries of the Platonic mysticism, almost in

the words of Socrates in the *Symposium*, showing that he who has the instinct of true love, and can discern the relations of true beauty in every form, will rise from height to height until to him is revealed the vision splendid of wondrous Beauty, in no human likeness, but absolute, simple, clear, and everlasting, not clouded with the stain of mortality or the changes and vanities of human life. "In this will the soul take so great a delight as to be overcome with the wonder and the joy of it, and, filled with holy reverence, will believe herself to be in Paradise. . . ."

It has been pointed out[1] that Spenser in his "Hymn of Heavenly Beautie," has given us this solemn invocation in poetic form, which may perhaps be easier to follow:

Vouchsafe then, O thou most Almightie Spright!
From whom all guifts of wit and knowledge flow,
To shed into my breast some sparkling light
Of thine eternall Truth, that I may show
Some litle beames to mortall eyes below
Of that immortall beautie, there with thee
Which in my weake distraughted mynd I see;

That with the glorie of so goodlie sight
The hearts of men which fondly here admyre
Faire seeming shewes, and feed on vaine delight,
Transported with celestiall desyre
Of those faire formes, may lift themselves up hyer,
And learne to love, with zealous humble dewty,
Th' eternall fountaine of that heavenly beauty.

"When our Courtier shall have reached this point, I would not have him rest content, but with a brave heart follow after his guide the sublime way which will lead him to the summit of true happiness. . . . Thus shall he behold that beauty which can be seen alone by

[1] By Walter Raleigh.

the eyes of the mind, becoming ever more vivid as those of the body wax dim. Therefore the soul, free from all vice, purified by the study of true philosophy, turns towards the spiritual life, and full of holy knowledge will, as it were, awake out of a deep sleep, open her eyes, and behold within herself a shining ray of that light which is the true image of angelic beauty. . . . Ravished with the splendour of that light, the soul will burn with eager desire, until in divine ecstasy she findeth the footsteps of God, in the contemplation of whom, as to her most blessed end, she seeketh her rest. And burning in this holy flame, the soul will rise to her noblest self; no longer overshadowed with the dark night of earthly things, she will behold indeed the Heavenly Beauty . . . and being changed into the nature of an angel, will understand all things that may be understood, and without any veil or cloud, will behold the vast sea of pure Heavenly Beauty, and receive it into herself, and enjoy that supreme felicity which may not be understood by the senses. . . .

"As fire tries gold and refines it, so this most holy fire in the soul destroys and consumes all that is mortal, and revives and makes beautiful the celestial part. Such was the fire in which Hercules was burnt on Mount Œta, and after death became holy and immortal; this is the burning bush of Moses, the fiery chariot of Elijah, the divided tongues of fire at Pentecost; and how marvellous is that manifold grace and happiness in the souls of those who are worthy to behold it, when they forsake this low earth and flee upward to heaven. Let us, therefore, turn all our thoughts to this most holy light, pointing out the heavenward way to us; and putting aside all earthly

affections in which we were clothed, let us ascend those stairs, on whose lowest step rests the shadow of sensual beauty, until we attain unto that sublime height where true and Heavenly Beauty dwells, hid in the innermost secret treasure of God, lest unhallowed eyes may see it. There shall we find a most blessed end for all our desires, true repose after weary toil, a certain remedy for all sorrows, a healing from our infirmities, and a most sure haven after the troublesome storms of the tempestuous sea of this life.

"Oh, thou most holy Love, what mortal tongue can praise thee aright? Thou most beautiful, most excellent, most wise, springing from Divine beauty, goodness, and wisdom, wherein thou dost abide. . . . Thou sweetest bond of unity, bringing discords into harmony, changing foes into friends, giving fruit to the earth, calm to the sea, and to heaven its light of life. Therefore vouchsafe, O Lord, to hearken to our prayers; instil Thyself into our hearts, and with the brightness of Thy most holy fire lighten our darkness, and as a faithful Guide in this blind labyrinth show us the true way, and after long vain wandering . . . make us to hear that celestial harmony so entrancing that there shall never more be any discord of passion within us. . . . Purge our eyes from misty ignorance with the shining rays of Thy light . . . accept our souls which we offer unto Thee for a sacrifice; consume them in the living flame that after they are severed in all things from the body, that with everlasting and most sweet bonds they may be united to the Heavenly Beauty. Thus drawn out of ourselves, and as true lovers, transformed into the beloved, may we be raised from the earth and admitted to the feast of angels. To us

death will be most happy and welcome as to the patriarchs of old, whose souls in the most ardent contemplation were rapt from the body and joined unto God."

As Messer Pietro Bembo came to an end of his lofty mystical exposition of Heavenly Love and Heavenly Beauty, he remained silent and motionless, as though ravished out of himself, in the midst of the company who still seemed to hear the echoes of those solemn unearthly harmonies. Then the Lady Emilia touched the fold of his robe, and said: "Take heed, Messer Pietro, lest these thoughts draw away your soul to forsake your body." "Signora," he replied, "it would not have been the first miracle that love hath wrought in me."

The spell was broken by Signor Gaspar Pallavicino, who, even at this high-pitched moment, played his usual part of advocate against women. He remarks that the way which leadeth to this bliss is steep and difficult for men, but impossible for women. He has not read that they ever attained unto this grace, although many men have thus risen, such as Plato, Socrates, Plotinus, and others, and a number of the holy fathers, such as Saint Francis. Only the mighty power of this Love could raise up Saint Paul the Apostle to the vision of that secret glory, of which it is not lawful for man to speak; nor reveal to Saint Stephen the heavens open before his ecstatic gaze.

Then replied Il Magnifico Giuliano: "Nay, in this matter women are not surpassed by men, for Socrates himself confesses that all the art and mysteries of love were taught to him by a woman—the sacred prophetess Diotima. And the angel, who with the fire of love

imprinted upon Saint Francis the most holy seal of the five wounds [the stigmata], has also found some women in our own age worthy of the same seal. [Catherine of Siena, and others.] Remember that to Mary Magdalene were many sins forgiven because she loved much, and the same heavenly grace working in her as in Saint Paul, was she many times through angelic love raised up to the third heaven. Think, too, of those many other women, on whom I dwelt more fully yesterday, who, in passionate love for the name of Christ, have not cared for their lives, and feared no torments nor any kind of death, however terrible and cruel it might be."

Signor Gaspar would have replied, but the Duchess interposed: "Messer Pietro Bembo shall be the judge of this, whether women are not as meet for heavenly love as men. But this we will defer until the morrow."

"Not so, but until this evening," exclaimed Signor Cesare Gonzaga.

"But how can it be this evening?" asked the Duchess Elisabetta.

Signor Cesare replied: "Because it is already day"; and he showed her the light, which already began to steal in through the windows.

So absorbed had been the listeners in the unearthly music of those divine harmonies, that the company had taken no note of time and the passing of the hours. The entrancing discourse had driven away all heaviness of sleep, and the noble lords and ladies rose wondering to their feet, as the windows were thrown open. From that eastern side of the Palace which looks out towards the lofty crest of Mount Catria, they found the Orient aglow with rosy dawn, and the stars

faded away save only Venus, the sweet ruler of the heaven, who keepeth the bounds of day and night. From thence came a soft breeze, which filled the air with keen freshness and awoke the sweet song of birds amid the murmuring woods of the hillside.

Whereupon they took leave with all reverence of the Signora Duchessa, and departed to their chambers without torches, the light of day sufficing. It is with somewhat of the same feeling that after this high Platonic vision we, too, return to the common light of day, and take leave of that

> . . . Divine Philosophy,
> Not harsh and rugged as dull fools suppose,
> But musical as is Apollo's lute.—MILTON.

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